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Dauber

By John Masefield

I

FOUR bells were struck, the watch was called on deck,
All work aboard was over for the hour,
And some men sang and others played at check,
Or mended clothes or watched the sunset glower,
The bursting west was like an opening flower
And one man watched it till the light was dim,
But no one went across to talk to him.

He was the Painter in that swift ship's crew,
Lampman and painter, tall, a slight-built man,
Young for his years and not yet twenty-two,
Sickly, and not yet brown with the sea's tan.
Bullied and damned at since the voyage began,
"Being neither man nor seaman, by his tally,"
He bunked with the idlers just abaft the galley.

His work began at five; he worked all day,
Keeping no watch and having all night in,
His work was what the mate might care to say,
He mixed red lead in many a bouilli tin;
His dungarees were smeared with paraffin;
"Go drown himself," his round-house mates advised him
And all hands called him Dauber and despised him.

Si, the apprentice, stood beside the spar,
Stripped to the waist, a basin at his side,
Slushing his hands to get away the tar,
And then he washed himself and rinsed and dried.
Towelling his face, hair-towzelled, eager-eyed,
He crossed the spar to Dauber and there stood
Watching the gold of heaven turn to blood.

They stood there by the rail while the swift ship
Tore on out of the tropics straining her sheets,
Whitening her trackway to a milky strip
Dim with green bubbles and twisted water-meets,
Her clacking tackle tugged at pins and cleats,
Her great sails bellied hard and her masts leaned;
They watched how the seas struck and burst and greened.

Si talked with Dauber, standing by the side.
"Why did you come to sea, Painter?" he said,
"I want to be a painter," he replied,
"And know the sea and ships from A to Z,
And paint great ships at sea before I'm dead.
Ships under skysails running down the Trade,
Ships and the sea; there's nothing finer made.

"But there's so much to learn, with sails and ropes,
And how the sails look, full or being furled,
And how the lights change in the troughs and slopes,
And the sea's colours up and down the world,
And how a storm looks when the sprays are hurled
High as the yard (they say) I want to see,
There's none ashore can teach such things to me.

"And then the men and rigging, and the way
Ships move, running or beating, and the poise
At the roll's end, the checking in the sway,
I want to paint them perfect, short of the noise,
And then the life, the half-decks full of boys,
The fo'c's'les with the men there, dripping wet:
I know the subjects that I want to get.

"It's not been done, the sea, not yet been done,
From the inside, by one who really knows,
I'd give up all if I could be the one,
But art comes dear the way the money goes.
So I have come to sea and I suppose
Three years will teach me all I want to learn
And make enough to keep me till I earn."

Even as he spoke his busy pencil moved
Drawing the leap of water off the side
Where the great clipper trampled iron-hooved
Making the blue hills of the sea divide,
Shearing a glittering scatter in her stride,
And leaping on full tilt with all sails drawing
Proud as a war-horse, snuffing battle, pawing.

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"I cannot get it yet, not yet," he said,
"That leap and light and sudden change to green,
And all the glittering from the sunset's red,
And the milky colours where the bursts have been,
And the great clipper striding like a queen,
Over it all, all beauty to the crown,
I see it all, I cannot put it down.

"It's hard, not to be able. There, look there,
I cannot get the movement nor the light:
Sometimes it almost makes a man despair
To try and try and never get it right.
O, if I could, O, if I only might
I wouldn't mind what hells I'd have to pass,
Not if the whole world called me fool and ass."

Down sank the crimson sun into the sea
The wind cut chill at once, the west grew dun.
"Out sidelights," called the mate; "Hi, where is he?"
The boatswain called, "Out sidelights, damn you; run."
"He's always late or lazing," murmured one,
"The Dauber, with his sketching." Soon the tints
Of red and green passed on dark water-glints.

Darker it grew, still darker, and the stars
Burned golden, and the fiery fishes came.
The wire-note loudened from the straining spars,
The sheet-blocks clacked together always the same,
The rushing fishes streaked the seas with flame,
Racing the one speed noble as their own,
What unknown joy was in those fish unknown.

Just by the round-house door as it grew dark
The boatswain caught the Dauber with "Now, you.
Till now I've spared you, damn you, now you hark
I've just had hell for what you didn't do.
I'll have you broke and sent among the crew
If you get me more trouble by a particle.
Don't you forget, you daubing useless article.

"You thing, you twice-laid thing from Port Mahon."
Then came the cook's "Is that the Dauber there?
Why don't you leave them stinking paints alone?
They stink the house out, poisoning all the air,
Just take them out." "Where to?" "I don't care where
I won't have stinking paints here." From their plates
"That's right; wet paint breeds fever," growled his mates.

He took his still wet drawings from the berth
And climbed the ladder to the deck-house top,
Beneath, the noisy half-deck rang with mirth
For two ship's boys were putting on the strop.
One, clambering up to let the skylight drop,
Saw him and scuttled down and whispered "Sammy,
Here's Dauber mooning on the deck-house, dammy."

"Watch what he does": they watched; five pairs of eyes,
Stared through the slit to see what Dauber did.
They saw him watch the rising moon with sighs,
Then bend to the ship's longboat on the skid
And lay beneath her something which he hid.
"Myst'ry in high life," whispered one to t'other,
"The Foundling Babe, or Who was Peter's Mother?"

He stayed a moment, leaning on the boat,
Watching the constellations rise and burn,
Until the beauty took him by the throat
So stately is their glittering over-turn;
Armies of marching eyes, armies that yearn
With banners rising and falling and passing by
Over the empty silence of the sky.

He sighed again and looked at the great sails
To get a memory of their look at night,
The high trucks traced on heaven and left no trails,
The moonlight made the topsails almost white,
The passing sidelight seemed to drip green light
And on the clipper rushed with fire-bright bows,
He sighed "I'll never do't," and left the house.

"Now, Sammy," said the reefers. Up they crept,
Treading on tip-toe, on the Dauber's track.
They groped below the boat, their right hands swept
From chock to skid and came rewarded back.
"Drawings, Lord love us, sketches, more, a stack.
Hush, or they'll hear us. Hush. You little fishes
There's boatswain making Dauber wash the dishes."

They took the drawings to the half-deck. There
Under the swinging lamp they looked and mocked.
"'*A boat at night with trawl down, burning a flare*'
Lord's me; '*An Ocean Charger*' . . . sickle-hocked.
'*At sea.*' I'd do a better three-parts cocked.
'*A topsail,*' without buntlines, Dauber's style;
Put end to end they almost reach a mile!"

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The oldest reefer lit his pipe and spat,
"We'll have some fun with these," he said. "Now, Joe,
A job for you, and see you do it pat.
Pick up that empty tin, my son, and go
Aft to the lamproom."
"Mate's there."
"Even so,
Do what you're told, lay aft and fill that tin
With turps and bring it back, or mind your skin."

"But Sam, the mate's there." "Jao, you Kitmutgar;
Jao; pasea." He went, he filled the can,
Dodging the mate, and "Here," he said, "you are;
This is the turps; now Sammy, what's the plan?"
"Rouse out a mess-clout now, my little man,
And wash these daubs with turps until they're gone.
And then we'll put them back. Heave round. Lay on."

They smeared the paint with turpentine until
They could remove with mess-clouts every trace
Of quick perception caught by patient skill
And lines that had brought blood into his face;
They wiped the pigments off and did erase,
With knives, all sticking clots: when they had done
Under the boat they laid them every one.

All he had drawn since first he came to sea,
His six weeks' leisure fruits, they laid them there;
They chuckled then to think how mad he'd be
Finding his paintings vanished into air.
Eight bells were struck, and feet from everywhere
Went shuffling aft to muster in the dark,
The mate's pipe glowed above, a dim red spark.

Names in the darkness passed and voices cried,
The red spark glowed and died, the faces seemed
As things remembered when a brain has died
To all but high intenseness deeply dreamed;
Like hissing spears the fishes' fire streamed,
And on the clipper rushed with tossing mast,
A bath of flame broke round her as she passed.

The watch was set, the night came, and the men
Hid from the moon in shadowed nooks to sleep,
Bunched like the dead, still like the dead, as when
Plague in a city leaves none even to weep.
The ship's track brightened to a mile-broad sweep;
The mate there felt her pulse and eyed the spars.
Southwest by south she staggered, under the stars.

Down in his bunk the Dauber lay awake
Thinking of his unfitness for the sea.
Each failure, each derision, each mistake,
There in the life not made for such as he;
A morning grim with trouble sure to be,
A noon of pain from failure, and a night
Bitter with men's contemning and despite.

This in the first beginning, the green leaf,
Still in the Trades before bad weather fell;
What harvest would he reap of hate and grief
When the loud Horn made every life a hell?
When the sick ship lay over, clanging her bell,
And no time came for painting or for drawing,
But all hands fought, and icy death came clawing?

Hell, he expected, hell. His eyes grew blind,
The snoring from his messmates droned and snuffled,
And then a gush of pity calmed his mind
And the sharp torment of his thought was muffled,
Without, on deck, the old, old seaman shuffled,
Humming his song, and through the open door
A moonbeam moved and thrust along the floor.

The green bunk-curtains moved, the brass rings clicked,
The cook cursed in his sleep, turning and turning,
The moonbeam's moving finger touched and picked
And all the stars in all the sky were burning.
"This is the art I've come for and am learning,
The sea and ships and men and travelling things.
It is most proud, whatever pain it brings."

He leaned upon his arm and watched the light
Sliding and fading to the steady roll;
This he would someday paint, the ship at night,
And sleeping seamen tired to the soul,
The space below the bunks as black as coal,
Gleams upon chests, upon the unlit lamp,
The ranging door-hook and the locker clamp.

This he would paint, and that, and all these scenes,
And proud ships carrying on, and men their minds,
And blues of rollers toppling into greens
And shattering into white that bursts and blinds,
And scattering ships running erect like hinds,
And men in oilskins beating down a sail
High on the yellow yard, in snow, in hail,

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With faces ducked down from the slanting drive
Of half-thawed hail, mixed with half-frozen spray,
The roaring canvas like a thing alive,
Shaking the mast, knocking their hands away,
The footropes jerking to the tug and sway,
The savage eyes salt-reddened at the rims
And icicles on the south-wester brims.

And sunnier scenes would grow under his brush,
The tropic dawn, with all things dropping dew,
The darkness and the wonder and the hush,
The insensate gray before the marvel grew.
Then the veil lifted from the trembling blue,
The walls of sky burst in, the flower, the rose,
All the expanse of heaven a mind that glows.

He turned out of his bunk; the cook still tossed,
One of the other two spoke in his sleep,
A cockroach scuttled where the moonbeam crossed;
Outside there was the ship, the night, the deep.
"It is worth while," the youth said; "I will keep
To my resolve. I'll learn to paint all this.
My Lord! my God! how beautiful it is!"

Outside was the ship's rush to the wind's hurry,
A resonant wire-hum from every rope,
The broadening bow-wash in a fiery flurry,
The leaning masts in their majestic slope,
And all things strange with moonlight: filled with hope
By all that beauty going as man bade
He turned and slept in peace. Eight bells were made.

II

Next day was Sunday, his free painting day,
While the fine weather held, from eight till eight;
He rose when called at five and did array
The roundhouse gear and set the kitbags straight.
Then, kneeling down like housemaid at a grate,
He scrubbed the deck with sand until his knees
Were blue with dye from his wet dungarees.

He swabbed the deck with clouts till it was dry,
Ranged straight the chests, scrubbed where the chests had lain,
Roused out the lockers where the whack-pots lie,
Wiped all the tins and put them back again.
Scrubbed at the lamp-room deck with might and main
To get the oil stains out, then cleaned his lamps,
Smoked by the night's affairs, greened by its damps.

Soon all was clean, his Sunday tasks were done,
His day was clear for painting as he chose,
The wetted decks were drying in the sun;
The men coiled up, or swabbed, or sought repose.
The drifts of silver arrows fell and rose
As flying fish took wing and skimmed and dipped.
A man poured buckets on the bosun stripped.

Eight bells were made. The painter went below.
"Now, Dauber, where's the breakfast?" said his mates.
"Now don't stand staring; take the kettle, go.
You like to have your loaf, whoever waits."
He fetched the kettle and the kid of cates,
Coffee and burgoo specked with many a weevil.
"You're always last," the cook growled, looking evil.

Next, at the meal, the bosun eyed the deck.
"Who cleaned the house out?" "Dauber." "So I guessed.
I want this floor made white without a speck.
Look there by Sails and see the way you've messed;
All tide-marks where you let the water rest:
You've scrubbed in strips and left the space between,
And now you'll get a stone and sweat it clean."

Then Chips began: "Now, Dauber," he began,
"We only tell you this for your own good.
A man at sea has got to be a man
Or do without man's treatment and man's food.
We won't have dirt: let that be understood,
Neither in you nor here." "No," said the Cook,
"The Dauber hasn't washed his hands yet; look.

"Look at his hands, all oil still to the wrists.
Why do you come to breakfast with such hands?
Bringing our breakfast, too, in dirty fists,
Marking my kids: look here at Dauber's brands."
The bosun spoke: "I've been in some commands.
They'd scrub a man for dirt like that," he said;
"Stripped bare, with sand and canvas in the head."

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Sails spoke again: "Dauber," he said, "you strip.
Unless you're clean we'll sand-and-canvas you.
If one man goes he gives it to the ship.
So what the crowd does every one must do.
So strip and scrub or we shall learn you to
With the fore-brace: now do it. Cleanliness
Before burgoo, and painting, too, I guess."

"That's you," said all. The Dauber stripped and soaped;
His messmates eyed his points and mocked his build:
His scraggy neck, his shoulders steeply sloped,
His ribs all sunken in, his chest unfilled,
His arms like stalks, his little hands unskilled
To strangle sail in snow squalls off the Horn;
And all the rest that shouldn't have been born.

So precious time was wasted, bell by bell,
Before the washing and the breakfast ended,
The artist's leisure which the wise gods sell
Only for life paid down and spirit spended.
The clipper hove her bows out and descended.
Bright span the bubbles on that glittering sea.
The Dauber swept the crumbs up and was free.

Free for two hours and more to tingle deep,
Catching a likeness in a line or tint,
The canvas running up in a proud sweep,
Wind-wrinkled at the clews and white like lint,
The glittering of the blue waves into glint.
Free to attempt it all, the proud ship's pawings,
The sea, the sky: he went to fetch his drawings.

Up to the deck-house top he quickly climbed;
He stooped to find them underneath the boat.
He found them all obliterated, slimed,
Blotted, erased, gone from him line and note.
They were all spoiled; a lump came in his throat,
Being vain of his attempts and tender skinned.
Beneath the light the watching reefers grinned.

The knives had made some of the canvas rough,
Spoiling the surface for a new endeavour.
Three were so spoiled, the rest were good enough,
Though all they once had borne was gone for ever.
"Ah! I suppose," he said, "they think that clever;
It's easy to destroy: doing's the pain:
Now I shall have to do them all again."

He clambered down, holding the ruined things.
"Bosun," he called, "look here, did you do these?
Wipe off my paints and cut them into strings
And smear them till you can't tell chalk from cheese.
Don't stare, but did you do it? Answer, please."
The bosun turned. "I'll give you a thick ear.
Do it? I didn't. Get to hell from here.

"I touch your stinking daubs? The Dauber's daft."
A crowd was gathering now to hear the fun,
The reefers tumbled out, the men laid aft,
The cook blinked, cleaning a mess-kid in the sun;
"What's up with Dauber now?" said everyone.
"Someone has spoiled my drawings, look at this."
"Well, that's a dirty trick, by God it is."

"It is," said Sam, "a low down dirty trick
To spoil a fellow's work in such a way,
And if you catch him, Dauber, punch him sick,
For he deserves it, be he who he may."
A seaman shook his old head, wise and gray.
"It seems to me," he said, "who ain't no judge,
Them drawings look much better now they're smudge."

"I think the same," said Cook; "and I," said Sails,
"Not that that's consolation, but it's true.
You find the man and cut him into wales;
I would, I tell you flat, if I were you."
"When was it done?" "Last night." "I wonder who.
The three mates look suspicious—don't they, fellows?
It might be them, or is the old man jealous?"

"Where were they, Dauber?" "On the deck-house."
"Where?"
"Under the long boat, in a secret place."
"The blackguard must have watched you put them there.
He is a swine. I tell him to his face.
I didn't think we'd anyone so base."
"Nor I," said Dauber. "There was six weeks' time
Just wasted in these drawings; it's a crime."

"Well, don't you say we did it," growled his mates.
"And as for crime, be damned, the things were smears,
Best overboard, like you, with shot for weights.
Thank God they're gone, and now go shake your ears."
The Dauber listened, very near to tears;
"Dauber, if I were you," said Sam again,
"I'd aft, and see the captain, and complain."

A sigh came from the assembled seamen there.
Would he be such a fool for their delight
As go to tell the captain? Would he dare?
And would the thunder roar, the lightning smite?
There was the captain come to take a sight,
Handling his sextant by the chart house aft.
The Dauber turned, the seamen thought him daft.

The captain took his sights, a mate below
Noted the times; they shouted to each other,
The captain quick with "Stop," the answer slow,
Repeating slowly one height, then another;
The swooping clipper stumbled through the smother,
The ladder-brasses in the sunlight burned.
The Dauber waited till the captain turned.

Under the jigger-staysail, hat in hand,
Head bent, as fits a suppliant out at sea,
He waited for dismissal or command,
As much alone as any man can be.
The mate was aft about the log, or he
Would have dismissed him forward, no word said;
The captain eyed the trim and turned his head.

There stood the Dauber, humbled to the bone,
Waiting as though to speak; he let him wait,
Glanced at the course and called in even tone,
"What is the man there wanting, Mr. Mate?"
The logship clattered on the grating straight,
The reel rolled to the scuppers with a clatter;
The mate came grim: "Well, Dauber, what's the matter?"

"Please, sir, they spoiled my drawings." "Who did?"
"They."
"Who's they?" "I don't quite know, sir."
"Don't quite know, sir?
Then why are you aft to talk about it, hey?
Whom d'you complain of?" "No one." "No one?" "No, sir."
"Well then, go forward till you've found them. Go, sir.
If you complain of someone, then I'll see.
Now get to hell and don't come bothering me."

"But sir, they washed them off and some they cut.
Look here, sir, how they spoiled them." "Never mind.
Go shove your head inside the scuttle butt
And that will make you cooler. You will find
Nothing like water when you're mad and blind.
Where were the drawings? In your chest or where?"
"Under the long boat, sir; I put them there."

"Under the long boat, hey? Now mind your tip.
I'll have the skids kept clear with nothing round them.
The long boat ain't a store in this here ship,
Lucky for you it wasn't I who found them.
If I had seen them, Dauber, I'd have drowned them.
Now you be warned by this. I tell you plain,
Don't stow your brass-rags under boats again.

"Go forward to your berth." The Dauber turned.
The listeners down below them winked and smiled,
Knowing how red the Dauber's temples burned.
Having lost the case about his only child
His work was done to nothing and defiled,
And there was no redress: the captain's voice
Spoke, and called "Painter," making him rejoice.

The captain and the mate conversed together.
"Drawings, you tell me, Mister?" "Yes, sir, views:
Wiped off with turps, I gather that's his blether.
He says they're things he can't afford to lose.
He's Dick, who came to sea in dancing shoes
And found the dance a bear dance. They were hidden
Under the long boat's chocks, which I've forbidden."

"Wiped off with turps?" The captain sucked his lip.
"Who did it, Mister?" "Reefers, I suppose.
Them devils do the most pranks in a ship;
The roundhouse might have done it, cook or bose."
"I can't take notice of it till he knows.
How does he do his work?" "Well, no offence;
He tries; he does his best. He's got no sense."

"Painter," the captain called; the Dauber came.
"What's all this talk of drawings? What's the matter?"
"They spoiled my drawings, sir." "Well, who's to blame?
The long boat's there for no one to get at her;
You broke the rules, and if you choose to scatter
Gear up and down where it's no right to be
And suffer as result, don't come to me.

"Your place is in the roundhouse, and your gear
Belongs where you belong. Who spoiled your things?
Find out who spoiled your things and fetch him here."
"But, sir, they cut the canvas into strings."
"I want no argument nor questionings.
Go back where you belong and say no more,
And please remember that you're not on shore."

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The Dauber touched his brow and slunk away;
They eyed his going with a bitter eye.
"Dauber," said Sam, "what did the captain say?"
The Dauber drooped his head without reply.
"Go forward, Dauber, and enjoy your cry."
The mate limped to the rail and conned the craft,
"Bosun," he called: the bosun hurried aft.

"What's this of Dauber's drawings being spoiled?"
The bosun spat. "The come-day-go-day fool,
A junk-laid twice-laid hank of left-hand-coiled:
The reefers done it last night in the cool.
His job's the minder's in an infant school;
Not coming to sea: the reefers done't at night.
They scoffed the lot, and I say serve him right.

"He's always playing hell with paints or chalk,
Making some mess or other, or a stink."
"Right," said the mate; he turned, resumed his walk,
Watching the trembling water droop and blink.
The topsail sheets would home another link.
He gave the order; the strong-shouldered men
Hauled, singing out, belayed, and slouched again.

"Well, that," exclaimed the mate; he eyed the trim;
All things were romping full, the Trade Wind clouds
Like flocks on the horizon clustered dim;
Black shadows crossed the deck from stays and shrouds.
The wavering silver arrows rose in crowds.
"Bosun," he cried, and when the man drew near,
"In future see the long-boat skids kept clear.

"Go round them every night. See round the boats."
"Ay, ay, sir," said the bosun: all was said.
Two brace blocks piped aloft in different notes,
The reef points pattered softly overhead.
Softly, but hurrying, too, as children tread,
A hush, a long swift hurry of little feet,
So faint, so sure, the drumming reef points beat.

The Dauber reached the berth and entered in.
Much mockery followed after as he went,
And each face seemed to greet him with the grin
Of hounds hot following on a creature spent.
"Aren't you a fool?" each mocking visage meant.
"Who did it, Dauber? What did captain say?
It is a crime, and there'll be hell to pay."

He bowed his head, the house was full of smoke,
The Sails was pointing shackles on his chest.
"Lord, Dauber, be a man and take a joke"—
He puffed his pipe—"and let the matter rest.
Spit brown, my son, and get a hairy breast;
Get shoulders on you at the crojick braces,
And let this painting business go to blazes.

"What good can painting do to anyone?
I don't say never do it; far from that,
No harm in sometimes painting just for fun.
Keep it for fun, and stick to what you're at.
Your job's to fill your bones up and get fat,
Rib up like Barney's bull and thick your neck.
Throw paints to hell, boy, you belong on deck."

"That's right," said Chips, "it's downright good advice.
Painting's no good. What good can painting do
Up on a lower topsail stiff with ice,
With all your little fishhooks frozen blue?
Painting won't help you at the weather clew
Nor pass your gaskets for you, nor make sail;
Painting's a balmy's job not worth a nail.

"Of course some famous painters do it well,
Make money, too; there's Hogarth did it right,
Who did the Harlot's Progress, that they sell
In Tiger Bay and up in Fan's Delight:
You'd think the views, perhaps, a bawdy sight.
But I was shipmates one time with a mate
Who said he use't to keep his daughter straight.

"And then there's others said to do it good
As well as Hogarth, better, too, but then
Them ducks are born with painting in the blood,
They know the business and are famous men.
I saw some pictures by them one time when
I came to London in the *Golden Rose*.
I tell you, Dauber, they were pictures, those.

"Like life some of the sheep were, beautiful,
They stood right out, you could have heard them bleat:
But for the glass you could have felt their wool,
And count the grass blades underneath their feet.
And plums, like real, you could have almost eat.
And one called 'Tragic News,' a young girl sighing.
You'll never paint like them, it's no use trying.

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"Wasting your time I call it, what you do,
Getting good paint and canvas slopped and messed.
A Chinaman does better ships than you
For half a dollar in a reefer's chest.
I tell you frankly, drop it, you'd be best
Drop it before you must, and don't think twice.
You'll thank me some day for my good advice."

The Dauber did not answer; time was passing.
He pulled his easel out, his paints, his stool.
The wind was dropping and the sea was glassing.
New realms of beauty waited for his rule.
The draught out of the crojick kept him cool.
He sat to paint, alone and melancholy.
"No turning fools" the Chips said, "from their folly."

He dipped his brush, and tried to fix a line,
And then came peace, and gentle beauty came,
Turning his spirit's water into wine,
Lightening his darkness with a touch of flame:
O joy of trying for beauty, ever the same,
You never fail, your comforts never end;
O balm of this world's way, O perfect friend.

There the four leaning spires of canvas rose,
Royals and skysails lifting, gently lifting,
White like the brightness that a great fish blows
When billows are at peace and ships are drifting:
With mighty jerks that set the shadows shifting,
The courses tugged their tethers: a blue haze
Drifted like ghosts of flocks come down to graze.

There the great skyline made her perfect round,
Notched now and then by the sea's deeper blue,
A smoke-smutch marked a steamer homeward bound,
The haze wrought all things to intenser hue.
In tingling impotence the Dauber drew
As all men draw, keen to the shaken soul,
To give a hint that might suggest the whole.

A naked seaman washing a red shirt
Sat at a tub whistling between his teeth;
Complaining blocks quavered like something hurt.
A sailor cut an old boot for a sheath,
The ship bowed to her shadow-ship beneath
And little slaps of spray came at the roll
Onto the deck planks from the scupper-hole.

He watched it, painting patiently, as paints
With eyes that pierce behind the blue sky's veil
The Benedictine in a Book of Saints
Watching the passing of the Holy Grail,
The green dish dripping blood, the trump, the hail,
The spears that pass, the memory and the passion,
The beauty moving under this world's fashion.

The reefers watched him from the deckhouse top,
Eager lest any rope should be mislaid,
Or grubbing under boats for yarns to drop
Onto the colours on his palette 'splayed:
Many a mock, many a jest they made.
"Is it a ship he's doing?" "Ask him." "No,
That's not a ship, Dick; it's a raree show."

He painted on, not caring, hardly hearing,
He breathed another air within his brain,
He saw the image of his thought appearing,
His minute's power made his pathway plain.
He was achieving now, he would attain
Past peak and stopping place on art's slow rise
To miracles of ships and seas and skies.

III.

They lost the Trades soon after; then came calm,
Light little gusts and rain, which soon increased
To glorious northers shouting out a psalm
At seeing the bright blue water silver-fleeced.
Hornwards she rushed, trampling the seas to yeast;
There fell a rain-squall in a blind day's end,
When for an hour the Dauber found a friend.

Out of the rain the voices called and passed,
The staysails flogged, the tackle yanked and shook;
Inside the harness-room a lantern cast
Light and wild shadows as it ranged its hook.
The watch on deck was gathered in the nook.
They had taken shelter in that secret place;
Wild light gave wild emotions to each face.

DAUBER

One beat the beef-cask and the others sang
A song that had brought anchors out of seas
In ports where bells of Christians never rang,
Nor any sea-mark blazed among the trees.
By forlorn swamps, in ice, by windy keys,
That song had sounded; now it shook the air
From these eight wanderers brought together there.

Under the poop-break, sheltering from the rain,
The Dauber sketched some likeness of the room,
A note to be a prompting to his brain,
A spark to make old memory re-illume.
"Dauber," said someone near him in the gloom,
"How goes it, Dauber?" It was reefer Si.
"There's not much use in trying to keep dry."

"No," said the Dauber. "What you doing?" "Drawing . . .
Drawing the watch in there." "A jolly crowd. . . .
They're always having sing-songs or else jawing.
If I could paint like you, Daub, I'd be proud.
The mate's just overheard, so don't talk loud.
I'd like to paint like you. Sit down and talk.
The deck's too swimming wet to take a caulk."

They sat upon the sail-room doorway coaming;
The lad held forth like youth, the Dauber listened
To how the boy had had a taste for roaming,
And what the sea is said to be and isn't.
Where the dim lamplight fell the wet deck glistened;
Si said the Horn was still two weeks away.
"But tell me, Dauber, where d'you hail from? Eh?"

The rain blew past and let the stars appear,
The seas grew larger as the moonlight grew,
For half an hour the ring of heaven was clear,
Dusty with moonlight, grey rather than blue;
In that great moon the showing stars were few.
The sleepy time-boy's feet passed overhead.
"I come from out past Gloucester," Dauber said.

"Not far from Pauntley, if you know those parts;
The place is Spital Farm near Silver Hill,
Above a traphatch where a millstream starts.
We had the mill once, but we've stopped the mill.
My dad and sister keep the farm on still.
We're only tenants, but we've rented there,
Father and son, for over eighty year.

"My grandad had it first, as a young man,
During Napoleon's wars, oh, years ago.
Farming was rich man's work when he began,
And he could farm; he made the corn to grow,
He cropped on bits we wouldn't even sow.
There were big profits then on breadstuffs; he
Had thirty acres corn where we have three.

"I've heard my father say that grandfer said
That when he first began and 'tended fairs,
The farmers' ordinaries, where they fed,
Would charge the men a guinea each for chairs,
And fiddlers came, all dinner, playing airs,
And all men drank champagne. That would seem strange
In farmers' inns to-day after Exchange.

"Well, grandfer had the farm until he died.
He held it sixty years from the same squire,
He saw great changes in that countryside,
And miles of cornland go again to mire,
And men, who'd drunk champagne, without a fire,
For corn came down to nothing with a run
And never rose after the wars were done.

"Father was born the year the riots were
In Bristol, so he says; my grandma said
That when they burnt the town she saw the glare,
Making the sky at midnight deep dull red.
She saw it kindling as she lay in bed
Just after dad was born, dad in the cot,
And nurse beside her snoring like a sot.

"Father has worked the farm since grandfer went;
It means the world to him, I can't think why.
They bleed him to the last half-crown for rent,
And this and that have almost milked him dry.
The land's all starved; if he'd put money by,
And corn was up and rent was down two-thirds. . . .
But then they aren't, so what's the use of words?

"Yet all the same it means the world to him,
The Spital Farm that he and grandfer made;
They've given their lives to bring it into trim,
They've worn out many a plough and many a spade,
And worked a many a cart-horse to a jade,
Dragging the waggons off the empty field;
It's his life's fight; he doesn't like to yield.

"And then his life's been spent there, man and boy;
He courted mother there, and lived there after.
He's had his sixty years there, and his joy;
He's had his happy blessings and his laughter.
He cut our names and grandfer's on a rafter.
He hopes his children's names, when he is cold,
Will fill the rafter full as it will hold.

"He couldn't bear to see the Spital pass
To strangers, or to think a time would come
When other men than us would mow the grass,
And other names than ours have the home.
Some sorrows come from evil thought, but some
Come when two men are near and both are blind
To what is generous in the other's mind.

"My mother came from under Meon Hill;
She died when I was only ten, poor woman!
I know my memory of her's living still,
And will, I hope, as long as I'm a human.
For no man had a mother like her, no man.
She wasn't like my father: rose and oak.
It wasn't marriage, but the Devil's joke.

"I was the only boy, and father thought
I'd farm the Spital after he was dead,
And many a time he took me out and taught
About manures and seed-corn white and red,
And soils and hops; but I'd an empty head.
Harvest or seed, I would not do a turn;
I loathed the farm, I didn't want to learn.

"After my mother died, when I was ten,
I went about more while the work was doing;
And, being a boy, I liked to help the men,
And taste the pomace at the cider screwing,
And ride the plough team to the forge for shoeing,
Or pick in hopyard, but I would not do
The harder lessons father set me to.

"And when he tried to teach me how to plough,
I wanted him to tell me how the earth
Nourished the seed corn in the dark, and how
The sun and rain could give the green grass birth,
And why there was no remedy for dearth,
And such-like simple questionings; but when
He tried to tell, I was for ploughing then.

"He did not mind at first, he thought it youth
Feeling the collar, and that I should change;
Then time gave him some inklings of the truth,
And that I loathed the farm and wished to range.
Truth to a man of fifty's always strange;
It was most strange and terrible to him;
It took his lamp just when his light grew dim.

"Yet still he hoped the Lord might change my mind.
I'd see him bridle in his wrath and hate,
And almost break my heart he was so kind,
Biting his lips sore with resolve to wait.
And then I'd try awhile: but it was Fate:
I didn't want to learn; the farm to me
Was mire and hopeless work and misery.

"Though there were things I loved about it, too,
The beasts, the apple-trees, and going haying,
And then I tried; but no, it wouldn't do,
The farm was prison and my thoughts were straying.
And there'd come father, with his grey head, praying,
'Oh, my dear son, don't let the Spital pass:
It's my old home, boy, where your grandfer was.

"'And now you won't learn farming; you don't care;
The old home's nought to you. I've tried to teach you;
I've begged Almighty God, boy, all I dare,
To use His hand if word of mine won't reach you.
Boy, for your grandfer's sake I do beseech you,
Don't let the Spital pass to strangers. Squire
Has said he'd give it you if we require.

"'Your mother used to walk here, boy, with me;
It was her favourite walk down to the mill,
And there we'd talk how little Heath would be
Knowing our work was going on here still.
You've got the brains, you only want the will.
Don't disappoint your mother and your father.
I'll give you time to travel, if you'd rather.'

"It wasn't travelling though, that filled my mind;
I could forget the farm by wandering out,
Tracing the little brooks and trying to find
A gravelly stretch with belly-rubbing trout.
Or, trickling from a dock-leaf in the spout,
Beside some lonely cottage up the hill,
The source of waters that would turn our mill.

"That's what I loved, water, and time to read;
Then I'd come home to sister's nagging tongue,
Saying my sin made father's heart to bleed,
And how she feared she'd live to see me hung.
And then she'd read me bits from Dr. Young,
And supper would begin and sister Jane
Would fillip dad till dad began again.

"'I've been here all my life, boy. I was born
Up in the room above, looks on the mead;
I never thought you'd cockle my clean corn
And leave the old home to a stranger's seed.
Father and I have made here 'thout a weed:
We've give our lives to make that. Eighty years.
And now I go down to the grave in tears.'

"And then I'd get ashamed and take off coat,
And work maybe a week, ploughing or sowing,
And then I'd creep away and sail my boat,
Or watch the water when the mill was going.
That's my delight, to be near water flowing,
Dabbling or sailing boats or jumping stanks
Or finding moorhens' nests along the banks.

"Then dad would catch me come away from work,
Going along the water, watching things,
And lose his temper, p'raps, and call me shirk,
And then we'd words, and tears, and pardonings,
And then I'd work, until the brooks and springs
Drew me away again to my heart's joy.
I did love being by water as a boy.

"One day my father found a ship I'd built;
He took the cart-whip to me over that,
And I, half-mad with pain and sick with guilt,
Went up and hid in what we called the flat:
A dusty hole given over to the cat;
She kittened there, the kittens had worn paths
Among the cobwebs, dust, and broken laths.

"So there I blubbered in the dust awhile,
With bits of plaster dropping in my eyes,
And then the little kittens made me smile,
They were so cunning planning a surprise.
There was a hole with sunlight full of flies,
And they'd come creeping up and pounce and miss,
And I got interested, watching this.

"And putting down my hand between the beams
I felt a leathery thing and pulled it clear;
A book with white cocoons stuck in the seams:
The spiders had had nests there many a year.
It was my mother's sketch-book; hid, I fear,
Out of my father's sight: he couldn't bear
For her to do a thing he couldn't share.

"There were her drawings, done when she was a girl,
Before she knew what sorrow was, or dad;
Before she put her front hair out of curl.
She'd leisure then for drawing, mother had.
She'd hid them in the roof like something bad,
Something she dare not show or felt a shame of,
For fear of being chid or made a game of.

"That was a find for me, that was a treasure,
I didn't heed my cart-whip weals a scrap;
And most the valley-pictures gave me pleasure,
With fields like counties in a printed map,
Or Brédon Hill in cloud wearing his cap,
Or Meon (where she played), or Sheepey Top,
Or sunny hayfields full of clover-cop.

"And one of Bristol. On her wedding-day
They went to Bristol by the Gloucester mail,
And father sparked her out to see the play,
Maria's Necklace and the *Winter's Tale.*
There was the yellow playbill withered pale,
Stuck in the book, and then a sketch she did
Before she stopped being queen or father chid.

"There were the dates upon them, pencilled faint;
March was the last one, eighteen sixty-three,
Unfinished, that, for tears had smeared the paint;
The rest was landscape not yet brought to be.
That was a holy afternoon to me,
That book a sacred book, the flat a place
Where I could meet my mother face to face.

"It was my secret room from that time on;
O many a golden time I spent up there.
Father and sister wondered where I'd gone,
But I was in the cobwebs, in my lair,
And through the peephole letting in the air,
I could command the valley at a look
And draw it on a blank page in the book.

"And after that drawing became my joy.
I cared for nothing else. I drew, I drew
Faster than dad or sister could destroy,
For everything I saw I tried to do.
To see the thing distinct and get it true,
And catch the very motion, as when grass
Or corn is ruffled when the flurries pass.

"That was my aim: I worked at that, I toiled,
And every penny I could get I spent
On paints, crayons, or paper which I spoiled
Up in the attic to my heart's content,
Till one day father asked me what I meant;
The time had come, he said, to make an end;
Now it must finish: what did I intend?

"Either I took to farming, like his son,
In which case he would teach me, early and late
(Provided that my daubing mood was done),
Or I must go: it must be settled straight.
If I refused to farm, there was the gate.
I was to choose, his patience was all gone;
The present state of things could not go on.

"Sister was there, she eyed me while he spoke.
The kitchen clock ran down and struck the hour,
And something told me father's heart was broke,
For all he stood so set and looked so sour.
Jane took a duster and began to scour
A pewter on the dresser; she was crying.
I stood stock still a long time, not replying.

"'Well, Joe,' said dad, 'which is it going to be?'
He waited; I said nothing; the clock ticked;
The cat with half-closed eyes purred at us three;
The wagging corner of the duster flicked.
I felt like a traitor in a story, tricked;
My secret writings found, my plots laid bare,
And my king come for me to answer there.

"Dad waited, then he snorted and turned round.
'Well, think of it,' he said; he left the room.
His boots went clop along the stony ground
Out to the orchard and the apple bloom.
A cloud came over the sun and made a gloom.
I swallowed with dry lips; then sister turned.
She was dead white but for her eyes that burned.

"'You're breaking father's heart, Joe,' she began;
'It's not as if . . .' she checked, in too much pain;
'Oh, Joe, don't help to kill so fine a man.
You're giving him our mother over again.
It's wearing him to death, Joe, heart and brain.
You know what store he sets on leaving this
To (it's too cruel)—to a son of his.

"'Yet you go painting all the day. Oh, Joe,
Couldn't you make an effort? Can't you see
What folly it is of yours? It's not as though
You are a genius or could ever be.
Oh, Joe, for father's sake, if not for me,
Give up this craze for painting, and be wise,
And work with father, where your duty lies.'

"'It goes too deep,' I said; 'I loathe the farm;
I couldn't help, even if I'd the mind.
Even if I helped I'd only do him harm.
Father would see it if he were not blind.
I was not built to farm, as he would find.
Oh, Jane, it's bitter hard to stand alone,
And spoil my father's life or spoil my own.'

"'Spoil both,' she said, 'the way you're shaping now.
You're only a boy not knowing your own good.
Where will you go, suppose you leave here? How
Do you propose to earn your daily food?
Draw? Daub the pavements? There's a feckless brood
Goes to the devil daily, Joe, in cities
Only from thinking how divine their wit is.

"'Clouds are they, without water, carried away,
And you'll be one of them, the way you're going,
Daubing at silly pictures all the day
And praised by silly fools who're always blowing.
And you choose this when you might go a-sowing,
Casting the good corn into chosen mould
That shall in time bring forth a hundredfold.'

"So we went on, but in the end, it ended.
I felt I'd done a murder, I felt sick.
There's much in human minds cannot be mended,
And that, not I, played dad a cruel trick.
There was one mercy: that it ended quick.
It did not drag along through years of care
Spoiling our lives and ending in despair.

"And then I joined my mother's brother: he
Kept school at Braddoclode by Severn stream;
A man so broken down by misery
His life went by him in a kind of dream.
But sometimes in his eyes there'd come a gleam
Remembering one he'd loved there years before,
Drowned by the tide, poor woman, off the shore.

"And there I learned house-painting for a living;
I'd have been happy there, but that I knew
I'd sinned before my father past forgiving,
And that they sat at home, that silent two,
Wearing the fire out and the evening through,
Silent, defeated, broken, in despair,
My plate unset, my name gone, and my chair.

"Sitting and hardly talking: father thinking
How when he died the auctioneers would sit
Blue-pencilling their lists where he sat; drinking,
Marking the sales or knocking off to spit.
The glass would be all broke, the grate unlit,
The beasts gone from the barton: auction bills
Stuck on the trees or hung from window-sills.

"And boot-marks and cigar-ends on the grass,
And the old name gone from the ancient hold,
And none but Jane to see the Spital pass
To one who had not walked its fields of old;
And strangers there, before his blood was cold
Down in the grave, changing his old routine,
Putting the tallat where the oasts had been.

"I saw all that; and sister Jane came white,
White as a ghost, with fiery weeping eyes,
I saw her all day long and half the night,
Bitter as gall, and passionate and wise.
'Joe, you have killed your father: there he lies.
You have done your work, you with our mother's ways.'
She said it plain, and then her eyes would blaze.

"And then one day I had a job to do,
Down below bridge, by where the docks begin;
And there I saw a clipper towing through
The open gates; she was just entering in.
Raked to the nines she was, lofty and thin,
A skysail-yarded clipper so well kept
She glistened like a racehorse as she stepped.

"That altered life for me; I had never seen
A ship before, for all my thought of ships;
And there was this great clipper like a queen,
With a white curl of bubbles at her lips,
All made of beauty to the stern's ellipse,
Her ensign ruffling red, her bunts in pile,
Beauty and strength together, wonder, style.

"She docked close to the gates and there she lay
Over the stream from me, but well in sight.
And as I worked I watched her all the day,
Finding her beauty ever fresh delight.
Her house-flag was bright green with strips of white;
High in the sunny air it rose to shake
Above the skysail poles most splendid rake.

"For six weeks more I was kept painting there
Down below bridge, where all the river's salt,
And every day her beauty seemed more fair,
And came more home to make my heart exalt.
Her lines, her spiring masts without a fault,
Her fan of mighty rigging reaching down:
She was a thing too queenly for a crown.

"I wasn't happy then; I felt too keenly
How hard it is to paint; but when I saw
Her masts across the river rising queenly,
Built out of so much chaos brought to law,
I learned the power of knowing how to draw,
Of beating thought into the perfect line,
I vowed to make that power of beauty mine.

"And when I felt unhappy I would look
Over the river at her, and her pride,
So calm, so quiet, came as a rebuke
To half the passionate pathways which I tried.
And though the green leaves browned and brown leaves died,
And dead leaves fell and cold November came,
She was still splendid there, and still the same.

"Then on a day she sailed; but when she went
My mind was clear on what I had to try;
To see the sea and ships and what they meant.
That was the thing I longed to do; so I
Drew and worked hard and studied, and put by,
And thought of nothing else but that one end,
But let all else go hang: love, money, friend.

"And now I've shipped as Dauber I've begun.
It was hard work to find a dauber's berth.
I hadn't any friends to find me one;
Only my skill, for what it may be worth.
But I'm at sea now, going about the earth,
And when the ship's paid off, when we return,
I'll join some Paris studio and learn.

"I shan't be much too old to join a school.
I want to learn my craft; I want to show
Father and sister that I'm not a fool,
And that the world has thought me wise to go.
It makes my heart ache thinking of them, though,
For even if my painting made a blaze,
They'd think me sinner still; they would not praise."

He stopped. The air came moist; Si did not speak;
The Dauber turned his eyes to where he sat,
Pressing the sail-room hinges with his cheek,
His face half covered with a drooping hat.
Huge dewdrops from the staysails dropped and spat.
Si did not stir; the Dauber touched his sleeve.
A little birdlike noise came from a sheave.

Si was asleep, sleeping a calm, dead sleep;
Still as a warden of the Egyptian dead,
In some old haunted temple buried deep
Under the desert sand sterile and red.
The Dauber shook his arm. Si jumped, and said,
"Good yarn, I swear. I say, you have a brain;
Was that eight bells that went?" He slept again.

One bell was struck; one bell. The watch was called.
A match flared in the half-deck and went out.
Forward, within the fo'c's'le, someone bawled,
The reefer in the half-deck raised his shout.
Each sleeper slowly roused, blinked like a lout,
Cursed, fumbled for his pipe in sleep's thick fog,
And then relapsed, dead heavy, like a log.

Si rubbed his eyes: "I've had a nap," he said.
"Was that one bell? What, Dauber, you still here?"
"Si, there," the mate's voice called from overhead.
The order made the lad's thick vision clear;
A something in the mate's voice made him fear.
"Si," said the mate, "I hear you've made a friend;
Dauber, in short. That friendship's got to end.

"You're a young gentleman. Your place aboard
Is with the gentlemen, abaft the mast,
You're learning to command; you can't afford
To yarn with any man. But there . . . It's past.
You've done it once; let this time be the last.
The Dauber's place is forward. Do it again,
I'll put you bunking forward with the men.

"Dismiss." Si went; but Sam, beside the mate,
Time-keeper there, walked with him to the rail
And whispered him the menace of "You wait";
Words which have turned full many a reefer pale.
The watch was changed: the watch on deck trimmed sail.
Sam, going below, called all the reefers down,
Sat in his bunk, and eyed them with a frown.

"Si, here," he said, "has spoiled the half-deck's name,
Talking to Dauber—Dauber, the ship's clout.
A reefer takes the Dauber for a flame;
The half-deck take the roundhouse walking out.
He's soiled the half-deck's honour. Now, no doubt,
The bosun and his mates will come here sneaking,
Asking for smokes, or blocking gangways speaking.

"I'm not a vain man, given to blow or boast;
I'm not a proud man; but I truly feel
That while I've bossed this mess and ruled this roast
I've kept this hooker's half-deck damned genteel.
Si must ask pardon, or be made to squeal.
Down on your knees, dog; them we love we chasten.
Jao, pasea, my son; in English, hasten."

Si begged for pardon, meekly kneeling down
Before the reefers' mess assembled grim.
The lamp above them smoked the glass all brown;
Beyond the door the dripping sails were dim.
The Dauber passed the door; none spoke to him.
He sought his berth and slept, or, waking, heard
Rain on the deckhouse; rain, no other word.

DAUBER

IV.

The glorious northers lasted from the Trades.
They, too, were dropped, and still the ship did shoulder
The brilliance of the water's white cockades
Into the milky green of smoky smoulder,
The sky grew bluer and the air grew colder;
Southward she thundered while the northers held,
Proud, with taut bridles, pawing, but compelled.

And still the Dauber strove, though all men mocked,
To draw the splendour of the passing thing;
And deep inside his heart a something locked,
Long pricking in him, now began to sting,
A fear of the disasters storm might bring.
His rank as painter would be ended then;
He would keep watch, and watch like other men.

And go aloft high on the yellow yard,
When the great ship was rolling scuppers under,
Burying her snout all round the compass card,
While the green water struck at her and stunned her;
When the lee-rigging slacked, when one long thunder
Boomed from the black to windward, when the sail
Booted and spurred the devil in the gale

For him to ride on men: that was the time
The Dauber dreaded; then the test would come,
When seas, half-frozen, slushed the decks with slime
And all the air was blind with flying scum;
When the great sails were furled, when the fierce hum
Of the weather rigging died in the great roar
Of the south-wester never tamed by shore.

He looked aloft. He had once worked aloft,
Shifting her suits one summer afternoon,
In the bright Trade wind, when the wind was soft,
Shaking the points, making the tackle croon:
But that was child's play to the future; soon
He would be ordered up when sails and spars
Were flying and going mad among the stars.

He had been afraid that first time; daunted, thrilled,
Not by the height so much as by the size:
And then the danger to the man unskilled
In standing on a rope that runs through eyes.
"But in a storm," he thought, "when the yards rise
And roll all down together, and snap their gear!"
The sweat came cold upon his palms for fear.

Even ashore he had sometimes felt a pang,
Swinging below the house-eaves on a stage.
But stages carry rails: here he would hang
Upon a jerking rope in a storm's rage,
Ducked, that the sheltering oilskin might assuage
The beating of the storm, clutching the jack,
Beating the sail and being beaten back.

Drenched, frozen, gasping, blinded, beaten dumb.
High in the night, reeling great blinding arcs
As the ship rolled, his chappy fingers numb,
The deck below a narrow blur of marks,
The sea a welter of whiteness shot with sparks
Now snapping up in bursts, now dying away,
Salting the horizontal snow with spray.

A hundred and thirty feet above the deck,
And there, while the ship rolls, boldly to sit
Upon a footrope moving, jerk and check,
While half-a-dozen seamen work on it.
Held by one hand, straining, by strength and wit,
To toss a gasket's coil around the yard:
How could he compass that, when blowing hard?

And if he failed in any least degree,
Or faltered for an instant, or showed slack,
He might go drown himself in the deep sea,
And add seven bubbles to the clipper's track.
He had signed his name; there was no turning back,
No pardon for default; this must be done.
One iron rule at sea binds everyone.

Till now he had been treated with contempt,
As neither man nor thing: a creature borne
On the ship's articles but left exempt
From all the seamen's life except their scorn.
But he would rank as seaman off the Horn;
Work as a seaman, and be kept or cast
By standards set for men before the mast.

DAUBER

Even now they shifted suits of sails; they bent
The storm-suit ready for the expected time.
The mighty norther that the Plate had lent
Had brought them far into the wintry clime.
At dawn, out of the shadow, there was rime;
The dim Magellan clouds were frosty clear,
The wind had edge, the testing time was near.

And then he wondered if the tales were lies
Told by old hands to terrify the new;
For, since the ship left England, only twice
Had there been need to start a sheet or clew;
Then only royals, for an hour or two,
And no seas broke aboard, nor was it cold.
What were these gales of which the stories told?

The thought went by. He had heard the bosun tell
Too often and too fiercely not to know
That being off the Horn in June is hell;
Hell of continual toil in ice and snow,
Wet through for weeks, hearing the wester blow,
Blow—shriek aloud for weeks. Hear without check
The thunder of green seas bursting white on deck.

Such was the weather he might look to find,
Such was the work expected: there remained
Firmly to set his teeth, resolve his mind,
And be the first, however much it pained,
And bring his honour round the Horn unstained
And win his mates' respect, and thence, untainted,
Be ranked as man, however much he painted.

He drew deep breath; a gantline swayed aloft
A new lower topsail hard with rope and leather,
Such as men's frozen fingers fight with oft
Below the Ramirez in Cape Horn weather,
The arms upon the yard hove all together,
Lighting the head along; a thought occurred
Within the Painter's brain like a bright bird.

That this, and so much like it, of man's toil
Compassed by naked manhood in strange places,
Was all heroic, but outside the coil
Within which modern art gleams or grimaces,
That if he drew that line of sailors' faces
Sweating the sail, their passionate play and change,
It would be new and wonderful and strange.

That was what going aloft meant, it would be
A training in new vision, a revealing
Of passionate men in battle with the sea
High on an unseen stage shaking and reeling,
And men through him would understand their feeling
Their might, their misery, their tragic power,
And all by suffering pain a little hour,

High on the yard with them, feeling their pain,
Battling with them; and it had not been done.
He was a door to new worlds in the brain,
A window opening letting in the sun,
A voice saying "Thus is bread fetched and ports won
And life lived out at sea where men exist
Solely by man's strong brain and sturdy wrist."

Wonders of marvellous pictures touched his thought;
He would endure it all, endure and learn,
Sharing the life till every gleam was caught
In agony's bitter etchings that so burn.
Then months of training after his return,
And then the dream fulfilled, the power to show
All he had seen and had the power to know.

So he decided as he cleaned his brasses,
Heading without, aloft, the curse, the shout
Where the taut gantline passes and repasses,
Heaving new topsails to be lighted out.
It was most proud, however self might doubt,
To share man's tragic toil and paint it true.
He took the offered Fate: this he would do.

That night the snow fell between six and seven,
A little feathery fall so light, so dry,
An aimless dust out of a confused heaven,
Upon an air no steadier than a sigh,
The powder dusted down and wandered by,
So purposeless, so many, and so cold,
Then died and the wind ceased and the ship rolled.

Rolled till she clanged, rolled till the brain was tired
Marking the acme of the heaves, the pause,
While the sea-beauty rested and respired,
Drinking great draughts of roller at her hawse.
Flutters of snow came aimless upon flaws.
"Lock up your paints," the mate said, speaking light,
"This is the Horn; you'll join my watch to-night."

V.

All through the windless night the clipper rolled
In a great swell with oily gradual heaves
Which rolled her down until her time-bells tolled
Clang, and the weltering water moaned like beeves.
The thundering rattle of slatting shook the sheaves,
Startles of water made the swing ports gush,
The sea was moaning and sighing and saying "Hush!"

It was all black and starless. Peering down
Into the water trying to pierce the gloom,
One saw a dim, smooth, oily glitter of brown
Heaving and dying away and leaving room
For yet another. Like the march of doom
Came those great powers of marching silences;
Then fog came down, dead cold, and hid the seas.

They set the Dauber to the fog-horn. There
He stood upon the poop, making to sound
Out of the pump the sailors' nasal blare,
Listening lest ice should make the note resound.
She bayed there like a solitary hound
Lost in a covert, all the watch she bayed;
The fog, come closelier down, no answer made.

Denser it grew, until the ship was lost;
The elemental hid her, she was merged
In mufflings of dark death like a man's ghost
New to the change of death, yet thither urged.
Then from the hidden waters something surged
Mournful, despairing, great, greater than speech,
A noise like one slow wave on a still beach.

Mournful, and then again, mournful, and still
Out of the night that mighty voice arose,
The Dauber at his foghorn felt the thrill:
Who rode that desolate sea? What forms were those?
Mournful, from things defeated, in the throes
Of memory of some conquered hunting ground,
Out of the night of death arose the sound.

"Whales," said the mate. They stayed there all night long,
Answering the horn, out of the night they spoke,
Defeated creatures who had suffered wrong
But were still noble underneath the stroke.
They filled the darkness when the Dauber woke;
The men came peering to the rail to hear
And the sea sighed and the fog rose up sheer,

A wall of nothing at the world's last edge,
Where no life came except defeated life.
The Dauber felt shut in within a hedge
Behind which form was hidden and thought was rife,
And that a blinding flash, a thrust, a knife,
Would sweep the hedge away and make all plain,
Brilliant beyond all words, blinding the brain.

So the night passed, but then no morning broke,
Only a something showed that night was dead,
A sea bird, cackling like a devil, spoke,
And the fog drew away and hung like lead:
Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and red,
Like glowering gods at watch it did appear,
And sometimes drew away and then drew near,

Like islands and like chasms and like hell,
But always mighty and red, gloomy and ruddy,
Shutting the visible sea in like a well,
Slow-heaving in vast ripples blank and muddy
Where the sun should have risen it streaked bloody;
The day was still-born; all the sea-fowl scattering
Splashed the still water, mewing, hovering, clattering.

Then Polar snow came down little and light,
Till all the sky was hidden by the small,
Most multitudinous drift of dirty white
Tumbling and wavering down and covering all,
Covering the sky, the sea, the clipper tall,
Furring the ropes with white, casing the mast,
Coming on no known air, but blowing past.

And all the air seemed full of gradual moan,
As though in those cloud-chasms the horns were blowing
The mort for gods cast out and overthrown,
Or for the eyeless sun plucked out and going.
Slow the slow gradual moan came in the snowing,
The Dauber felt the prelude had begun.
The snowstorm fluttered by, he saw the sun

DAUBER

Show and pass by, gleam from one towering prison
Into another, vaster and more grim,
Which in dull crags of darkness had arisen
To muffle-to a final door on him;
The gods upon the dull crags lowered dim,
The pigeons chattered, quarrelling in the track.
In the south-west the dimness dulled to black.

Then came the cry of: "Call all hands on deck."
The Dauber knew its meaning; it was come:
Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck
And crumples steel and smites the strong man dumb.
Down clattered flying kites and staysails: some
Sang out in quick, high calls; the fairleads skirled,
And from the south-west came the end of the world.

"Caught in her ball-dress," said the bosun, hauling.
"Lee-ay, lee-ay!" quick, high, came the men's call,
It was all wallop of sails and startled calling:
"Let fly," "Let go," "Clue up," and "Let go all,"
"Now up and make them fast." "Here, give us a haul,"
"Now up and stow them. Quick! My God, we're done!"
The blackness crunched all memory of the sun.

"Up," said the mate. "Mizen topgallants. Hurry!"
The Dauber ran, the others ran, the sails
Slatted and shook; out of the black a flurry,
Whirled in fine lines tattering the edge to trails;
Painting and art and England were old tales
Told in some other life to that pale man
Who struggled with white fear and gulped and ran.

He struck a ringbolt in his haste and fell,
Rose, sick with pain, half-lamed in his left knee
He reached the shrouds, where clambering men pell mell
Hustled each other up and cursed him; he
Hurried aloft with them: then from the sea
Came a cold, sudden breath that made the hair
Stiff on the neck as though Death whispered there.

A man below him punched him in the side:
"Get up you, Dauber, or let me get past."
He saw the belly of the skysail skied,
Gulped, and clutched tight, and tried to go more fast;
Sometimes he missed his ratline and was grassed,
Scraped his shin raw against the rigid line;
The clamberers reached the futtock-shrouds' incline.

Cursing they came; one, kicking out behind,
Kicked Dauber in the mouth, and one below
Punched at his calves; the futtock-shrouds inclined—
It was a perilous path for one to go.
"Up, Dauber, up!" a curse followed a blow;
He reached the top and gasped, then on, then on.
And one voice yelled "Let go!" and one "All gone!"

Fierce clamberers, some in oilskins, some in rags,
Hustling and hurrying up, up the steep stairs,
Before the windless sails were blown to flags
And whirled like dirty birds athwart great airs,
Ten men in all, to get this mast of theirs
Snugged to the gale in time. "Up, damn you, run!"
The mizen topmast head was safely won.

"Lay out!" the bosun yelled: the Dauber laid
Out on the yard, gripping the yard, and feeling
Sick at the mighty space of air displayed
Below his feet, where mewing birds were wheeling;
A giddy fear was on him, he was reeling,
He bit his lip half through, clutching the jack;
A cold sweat glued the shirt upon his back.

The yard shook to men's feet, a brace was loose,
He felt that he would fall, he bent, he bent,
Clammy with natural terror to the shoes,
While idiotic promptings came and went.
Then the great soul of his serene intent
Came winging warm upon him, like new blood,
Tingling each nerve, making each channel good.

To unknown strength, the shock passed, he could look
Forward, where, on the main, the skysail high,
Though now half smothered, kicked aloft and shook
Over the straining heads of Sam and Si.
A whirl of pellets of little snow drove by.
He saw the water darken. Someone yelled:
"Frap it! don't stay to furl. Hold on!" He held.

Darkness came down, half darkness, in a whirl;
The sky went out, the waters disappeared.
He felt a shocking pressure of blowing hurl
The ship upon her side; the darkness speared
At her with wind, she staggered, she careered,
Then down she lay, the Dauber felt her go,
He saw his yard tilt downwards; then the snow

DAUBER

Whirled all about, dense, multitudinous, cold,
Mixed with the wind's one devilish thrust and shriek
Which whiffled out men's tears, deafened, took hold,
Flattening the flying drift against the cheek.
The yards buckled and bent, man could not speak;
The ship lay on her side and the wind's sound
Had devilish malice at having got her downed.

At the first shock of falling Dauber's feet
Slid on the rope; he slid, gripping the jack,
Till one foot jammed against an iron sheet,
And the iron cap of the topmast propped his back,
Then passed a minute of roaring, whirling black.
His mate upon the yard yelled in his ear:
"Sail. Cut away. Cut rags." He could not hear.

"Cut!" yelled his mate; he looked, the sail was gone,
Blown into rags in the first furious squall.
The tatters drummed the devil's tattoo; on
The buckling yard a block thumped like a mall.
The ship lay, the sea smote her, the wind's bawl
Came 'Loo, 'Loo, 'Loo; the Devil cried his hounds
On to the poor spent stag strayed in his bounds.

"Cut! Ease her!" yelled his mate; the Dauber heard.
His mate wormed up the tilted yard and slashed,
A rag of canvas skimmed like a darting bird.
The snow whirled, the ship bowed to it, the gear lashed;
The Dauber left his perch, his sheath-knife flashed,
His numb hand hacked with it, to clear the strips;
The flying ice was salt upon his lips.

The ice was caking on his oilskins; cold
Struck to his marrow, beat upon him, stung.
The chill palsied his blood, it made him old;
The frosty scatter of death was being flung.
And still the ship lay over, still he clung,
Tatters of shouts were flung, the rags of yells
And clang, clang, clang, below beat the two bells.

Numb with the agony of the cold, he looked
Above him at the royal; there he saw
The bony finger of the lean spar crooked,
Bending to leeward like a clutching claw.
The mast's heel, working, ground its fidhole raw,
Royal and skysail beat in tatters: boys
Hacked at the rags, and "slat, slat, slat," the noise

Of their frayed, flapping trouser-ends beat, beat,
Beat in the wind, and still they hacked; and he
Hacked on the jerking yard half off his feet,
Cutting the scattering rags and tatters free.
They tied themselves in knots, they had such glee
To kick away their masters and to lose
The iron bonds of their constraining clews.

They cleared the weather-yard. "Now!" yelled his mate.
"Go down to leeward and cut away the rest."
Slide down the tilted pole, wrestle with fate.
Held by the oilskin buttons on his chest,
The Dauber's turn was come: he did his best,
Slid down and cut away. He felt his foot
Plucked from below; the bosun shook his boot.

"Leave that," the bosun shouted. "Crojick save."
The splitting crojick, not yet gone to rags,
Thundered below, beating till something gave.
Bellying between its buntlines into bags.
Some birds were blown past shrieking: dark, like shags,
Their backs seemed, looking down. "'Leu, 'Leu!" they cried.
The ship lay, the seas thumped her, she had died.

They reached the crojick yard, which buckled, buckled
Like a thin whalebone to the topsail's strain;
They laid upon the yard and heaved and knuckled,
Pounding the sail, which jangled and leapt again.
It was quite hard with ice, its rope like chain,
Its strength like seven devils, it shook the mast;
They cursed and toiled and froze: a long time passed.

Two hours passed, then a dim lightening came.
Those frozen ones upon the yard could see
The mainsail and the foresail still the same,
Still battling with the hands and blowing free,
Rags blew where kites and staysails used to be;
The lower topsails stood; the ship's lee deck
Creamed with four feet of water filled with wreck.

An hour more went by; the Dauber lost
All sense of hands and feet, all sense of all
But of a wind that cut him to the ghost
And of a frozen fold he had to haul,
Of heavens that fell and never ceased to fall
And ran in smoky snatches along the sea,
Leaping from crest to wave-crest, yelling: he

Lost sense of time, no bells went, but he felt
Ages go over him. At last, at last
They frapped the cringled crojick's icy pelt;
In frozen bulge and bunt they made it fast.
Then, scarcely live, they laid in to the mast.
The captain's speaking trumpet gave a blare:
"Make fast the topsail, Mister, while you're there."

Some seamen cursed, but up they had to go,
Up to the topsail yard to spend an hour
Stowing a topsail in a blinding snow
Which made the strongest man among them cower.
More men came up, the fresh hands gave them power,
They stowed the sail; then with a rattle of chain
One half the crojick burst its bonds again.

* * * * * *

They stowed the sail, frapping it round with rope,
Leaving no surface for the wind, no fold;
Then down the weather shrouds, half dead, they grope.
That struggle with the sail had made them old;
They wondered if the crojick furl would hold.
"Lucky," said one, "she didn't lose a spar."
"Lucky," the bosun said, "Lucky? We are.

"She came within two shakes of turning top,
Or stripping all her shroud-screws, that first quiff.
Now fish those wash-deck buckets out of the slop.
Here's Dauber says he doesn't like Cape Stiff.
This isn't wind, man, this is only a whiff.
Hold on, all hands; hold on!" A sea, half-seen,
Paused, mounted, burst and filled the main deck green.

The Dauber felt a mountain of water fall.
It covered him deep, deep, he felt it fill
Over his head, the deck, the fife-rails, all,
Quieting the ship, she trembled and lay still.
Then with a rush and shatter and clanging shrill,
Over she went; he saw the water cream
Over the bitts; he saw the half-deck stream.

Then in the rush he swirled, over she went,
Her lee rail dipped, he struck, and something gave.
His legs went through a port as the roll spent;
She paused, then rolled, and back the water drave,
He drifted with it as a part of the wave;
Half-drowned, half-stunned, exhausted, partly frozen,
He struck the booby hatchway; then the bosun

Leaped, seeing his chance, before the next sea burst
And caught him as he drifted, seized him, held,
Up-ended him against the bitts and cursed.
"This ain't the George's Swimming Baths!" he yelled,
"Keep on your feet"; another gray-back felled
The two together, and the bose, half blind,
Spat: "One's a joke," he cursed, "but two's unkind."

"Now, damn it, Dauber," said the mate, "look out,
Or you'll be over the side." The water freed,
Each clanging freeing-port became a spout.
The men cleared up the decks, as there was need;
The Dauber coiled up with them, feeling bleed
His head into his oilskins; the sky glowered,
The wind shrieked, and the mile-long gray-backs towered.

It was fast darkening, but the ship was saved,
She was snugged down, though fourteen sails were split.
Out of the dark a fiercer fury raved:
The gray-backs died and mounted, each crest lit
With a white toppling gleam that hissed from it
And slid, or leaped, or ran with whirls of cloud,
Mad with inhuman life that shrieked aloud.

The watch was called: Dauber might go below.
"Splice the main brace," the mate called; all laid aft
To get a gulp of momentary glow
As some reward for having saved the craft.
The steward ladled mugs from which each quaffed
Whisky, with water, sugar and limejuice, hot,
A quarter of a pint each made the tot.

Beside the lamp-room door the steward stood
Ladling it out, and each man came in turn,
Tipped his sou'wester, drank it, grunted "Good"
And shambled forward, letting it slowly burn.
When all were gone the Dauber lagged astern
Torn by his frozen body's lust for heat,
The liquor's pleasant smell, so warm, so sweet,

And by a promise long-since made at home
Never to taste strong liquor; now he knew
The worth of liquor, now he wanted some;
His frozen body urged him to the brew.
Yet it seemed wrong, an evil thing to do
To break that promise. "Dauber," said the mate,
"Drink and turn in, man; why the hell d'ye wait?"

"Please, sir, I'm temperance." "Temperance are you, hey?
That's all the more for me; so you're for slops?
I thought you'd had enough slops for to-day.
Go to your bunk and ease her when she drops.
And . . . dammy, steward, you brew with too much hops. . .
Stir up the sugar, man . . . and tell your girl
How kind the mate was teaching you to furl."

Then the mate drank the remnants, six men's share,
And ramped into his cabin, where he stripped
And danced unclad and was uproarious there.
In waltzes with the cabin-cat he tripped,
Singing in tenor clear that he was pipped,
That "he who strove the tempest to disarm
"Must never first embrail the lee yard-arm,"

And that his name was Ginger. Dauber crept
Back to the roundhouse, gripping by the rail.
The wind howled by, the passionate water leapt,
The night was all one roaring with the gale.
Then at the door he stopped, uttering a wail,
His hands were perished numb and blue as veins,
He could not turn the knob for both the Spains.

A hand came shuffling aft, dodging the seas,
Singing "Her nut brown hair" between his teeth,
Taking the ocean's tumult at his ease,
Even when the wash about his thighs did seethe.
His soul was happy in its happpy sheath:
"What, Dauber, won't it open? Fingers cold?
You'll talk of this time, Dauber, when you're old."

He flung the door half-open, and a sea
Washed them both in, over the splashboard, down.
"You silly salt miscarriage," spluttered he.
"Dauber, pull out the plug before we drown.
That's spoiled my laces and my velvet gown.
Where is the plug?" groping in pitch dark water
He sang between his teeth "the farmer's daughter."

It was pitch dark within there, at each roll
The chests slid to the slant, the water rushed,
Making full many a clanging tin pan bowl
Into the black below-bunks as it gushed.
The dog-tired men slept through it, they were hushed.
The water drained, and then with matches damp
The man struck heads off till he lit the lamp.

"Thank you," the Dauber said; the seaman grinned.
"This is your first foul weather?" "Yes." "I thought
Up on the yard you hadn't seen much wind.
Them's rotten sea-boots, Dauber, that you brought.
Now I must cut on deck before I'm caught."
He went, the lamp-flame smoked, he slammed the door;
A film of water loitered across the floor.

The Dauber watched it come, and watched it go.
He had had a revelation of the lies
Cloaking the truth men never choose to know;
He could bear witness now and cleanse their eyes.
He had beheld in suffering, he was wise.
This was the sea, this searcher of the soul,
This never-dying shriek fresh from the Pole.

He shook with cold, his hands could not undo
His oilskin buttons, so he shook and sat
Watching his dirty fingers, dirty blue,
Hearing without the hammering tackle slat.
Within, the drops from dripping clothes went pat,
Running in little patters, gentle, sweet,
And "Ai, Ai," went the wind, and the seas beat.

His bunk was sopping wet, he clambered in,
None of his clothes were dry: his fear recurred.
Cramps bunched the muscles underneath his skin,
The great ship rolled until the lamp was blurred.
He took his Bible and tried to read a word,
Trembled at going aloft again, and then
Resolved to fight it out and show it to men.

Faces recurred, fierce memories of the yard,
The look of the sail, the savage eyes, the jests,
The oaths of one great seaman, syphilis-scarred,
The tug of the leeches jammed beneath their chests,
The buntlines bellying bunts out into breasts.
The deck so desolate-grey, the sky so wild.
He fell asleep and slept like a young child.

But not for long: the cold awoke him soon,
The hot-ache and the skin-cracks and the cramp,
The seas thundering without, the gale's wild tune,
The sopping misery of the blankets damp:
A speaking-trumpet roared, a seaboot's stamp
Clogged at the door, a man entered to shout,
"All hands on deck! Arouse here! Tumble out!"

DAUBER

The caller raised the lamp; his oilskins clicked
As the thin ice upon them cracked and fell.
"Rouse out," he said. "This lamp is frozen wicked.
"Rouse out"; his accent deepened to a yell.
"We're among ice; it's blowing up like hell;
We're going to hand both topsails. Time, I guess,
We're sheeted up. Rouse out. Don't stay to dress."

"Is it cold on deck?" said Dauber. "Is it cold?
We're sheeted up, I tell you, inches thick;
The fo'c's'le's like a wedding-cake, I'm told;
Now tumble out, my sons; on deck here; quick.
Rouse out, away, and come and climb the stick:
I'm going to call the half-deck. Bosun. Hey.
Both topsails coming in. Heave out. Away."

He went; the Dauber tumbled from his bunk,
Clutching the side; he heard the wind go past,
Making the great ship wallow as if drunk.
There was a shocking tumult up the mast.
"This is the end," he muttered, "come at last;
I've got to go aloft, facing this cold.
I can't. I can't. I'll never keep my hold."

"I cannot face the topsail yard again.
I never guessed what misery it would be."
The cramps and hot-ache made him sick with pain.
The ship stopped suddenly from a devilish sea,
Then with a triumph of wash, a rush of glee,
The door burst in, and in the water rolled,
Filling the lower bunks, black, creaming, cold.

The lamp sucked out, "wash" went the water back,
Then in again, flooding; the bosun swore.
"You useless thing, you Dauber, you lee slack,
Get out, you heekapoota; shut the door.
You coo-ilyaira, what are you waiting for?
Out of my way, you thing, you useless thing."
He slammed the door indignant, clanging the ring.

And then he lit the lamp, drowned to the waist.
"Here's a fine house. Get at the scupper holes."
He bent against it as the water raced.
"And pull them out to leeward when she rolls;
They say some kinds of landsmen don't have souls.
I well believe. A Port Mahon baboon
Would make more soul than you got with a spoon."

Down in the icy water Dauber groped
To find the plug; the racing water sluiced
Over his head and shoulders as she sloped.
Without, judged by the sound, all hell was loosed.
He felt cold Death about him tightly noosed,
That Death was better than the misery there,
Iced on the quaking foothold high in air.

And then the thought came: "I'm a failure. All
My life has been a failure: they were right.
It will not matter if I go and fall;
I should be free, then, from this hell's delight.
I'll never paint. Best let it end to-night.
I'll slip over the side. I've tried and failed."
So, in the ice-cold, in the night, he quailed.

Death would be better, Death, than this long hell
Of mockery and surrender and dismay,
This long defeat of doing nothing well,
Playing the part too high for him to play.
"O Death, who hides the sorry thing away,
Take me, I've failed. I cannot play these cards."
There came a thundering from the topsail yards.

And then he bit his lips, clenching his mind,
And staggered out to muster, beating back
The coward frozen self of him that whined.
Come what cards might, he meant to play the pack.
"Ai!" screamed the wind, the topsail sheets went clack,
Ice filled the air with spikes, the grey-backs burst.
"Here's Dauber," said the mate, "on deck the first.

"Why, holy sailor, Dauber, you're a man;
I took you for a soldier; up now, come."
Up on the yards already they began
That battle with a gale which strikes men dumb.
The leaping topsail thundered like a drum,
The frozen snow beat in the face like shots.
The wind spun whipping wave crests into clots.

So up, upon the topsail yard again,
In the great tempest's fiercest hour, began
Probation to the Dauber's soul of pain
Which crowds a century's torment in a span.
For the next month the ocean taught this man,
And he, in that month's torment, while she wested,
Was never warm, nor dry, nor full, nor rested.

But still it blew, or, if it lulled, it rose
Within the hour and blew again; and still
The water as it burst aboard her froze.
The wind blew off an ice-field, raw and chill,
Daunting man's body, tampering with his will;
But after thirty days a ghostly sun
Gave sickly promise that the storms were done.

VI.

A great grey sea was running up the sky;
Desolate birds flew past, their mewings came
As that lone water's spiritual cry,
Its forlorn voice, its essence, its soul's name.
The ship limped in the water as if lame.
Then in the forenoon watch to a great shout
More sail was made, the reefs were shaken out,

A slant came from the south; the singers stood
Clapped to the halliards, hauling to a tune,
Old as the sea, a fillip to the blood,
While the upper topsail rose like a balloon.
"So long, Cape Stiff. In Valparaiso soon,"
Said one to other as the ship lay over,
Making her course again, again a rover.

All felt Cape Horn was ended, all men's hearts
Lightened, and all men sang, so fair, so sweet
Showed the half sunny heaven, blue in parts,
After the month-long drive of Polar sheets;
They sang "King Louis," hauling aft the sheets;
Fo'c's'le and half-deck sang, the ship was ringing
With snatches of old songs and seamen singing.

Slowly the sea went down as the wind dropped;
Clear rang the songs, "Hurrah, Cape Horn is bet."
And some hung clothes to dry and others mopped
The filthy deckings, slimp with long wet,
Where, mouldered over, tattered, gone to fret,
Old clothes appeared, old, drowned, forgotten things,
Washed under bunks and soaked to ravellings.

The Dauber, scrubbing out the roundhouse, found
Old pantiles gone to pulp, old clouts, old gear
In the below-bunks blackness long since drowned
During the agony of the Cape Horn year.
He sang in scrubbing, for he had done with fear;
He had endured the worst, he had passed through;
He thought of all the pictures he would do

On the immense scale of the sailor's stage:
The yard, the ship, the sea, the power of man
Matched against chaos in elemental rage,
The way of the wind upon the waters wan.
The pelting off the Horn had given him tan,
Brightened his eyes and plumped him, arms and face;
He had got manhood at the testing place.

Singing he scrubbed, passing his watch below,
Making the roundhouse fair; the Bosun watched,
Bringing his knitting slowly to the toe;
Sails stretched a mizen skysail which he patched;
They thought the Dauber was a bad egg hatched.
"Daubs," said the Bosun cheerily, "can you knit?
I've made a Barney's Bull of this last bit."

Then, while the Dauber counted, Bosun took
Some marline from his pocket. "Here," he said,
"You want to know square sennit? So fash. Look.
Eight foxes take, and stop the ends with thread;
I've known an engineer would give his head
To know square sennit." As the Bose began
The Dauber felt promoted into man.

It was his warrant that he had not failed,
That the most hard peak in his difficult climb
Had not been past attainment; it was scaled,
In spite of perilous ways and slippery slime.
He had emerged out of the iron time
And knew that he could compass his life's scheme;
He had the power sufficient to his dream.

Then dinner came, and now the sky was blue.
The ship was standing north, the Horn was rounded;
She made a thundering as she weltered through.
The mighty grey-backs glittered as she bounded,
More sail was piled upon her: she was hounded
North, while the wind came; like a stag she ran
Over grey hills and hollows of seas wan.

DAUBER

She had a white bone in her mouth: she sped;
Those in the roundhouse watched her as they ate
Their meal of pork-fat fried with broken bread;
"Good old," they cried, "she's off, she's gathering gait."
Her track was whitening like a Lammas spate.
"Good old," they cried, "oh, give her cloth. Hurray
For three weeks more to Valparaiso Bay."

"She smells old Vallipo," the bosun cried,
"We'll be inside the tier in three weeks more,
Lying at double-moorings where they ride
Off of the Market, half a mile from shore,
And bumboat pan, my sons, and figs galore,
And girls in black mantillas fit to make a
Poor seaman frantic when they dance the cueca.

"Now, Daubs, stand by to smart her up for port,
Rouse out your paints, this clipper needs some brightening.
No afternoons below now days are short,
But all hands holystoning her and whitening
And making all her brass as bright as lightning.
She's a crack ship, this hooker; smartened up
She'll queen the tier and win the Consul's cup."

Eight bells were made, the watch was changed, and now
The mate spoke to the Dauber, "This is better.
We'll soon be getting mudhooks over the bow.
She'll make her passage still if this'll let her.
O, run, you drogher, dip your fo'c's'le wetter.
Well, Dauber, this is better than Cape Horn.
Them topsails made you wish you'd not been born."

"Yes, sir," the Dauber said. "Now," said the mate,
"We've got to smart her up. Them Cape Horn seas
Have made her paintwork like a rusty grate.
O, didn't them topsails make your fishhooks freeze?
A topsail don't pay heed to 'won't you, please?'
Well. And you've seen Cape Horn, Dauber; you've learned.
You've dipped your hand and had your fingers burned.

"And now you'll stow that folly, trying to paint;
You've had your lesson; you're a sailor, now.
You come on board a woman ready to faint.
All sorts of slush you'd learned, the Lord knows how.
Well, Cape Horn's sent you wisdom over the bow,
If you've got sense to take it. You're a sailor.
My God! before, you were a woman's tailor.

"So throw your paints to blazes and have done.
Words can't describe the silly things you did
Sitting before your easel in the sun,
With all your colours on the paint-box lid.
I blushed for you . . . and then the daubs you hid.
My God! you'll have more sense now, eh? You've quit?"
"No, sir." "You've not?" "No, sir." "God give you wit.

"I thought you'd come to wisdom." Thus they talked
While the great clipper took her bit and rushed
Like a skin-glistening stallion not yet baulked,
Till fire-bright water at her swingports gushed;
Poising and bowing down her forefoot crushed
Bubble on glittering bubble; on she went.
The Dauber watched her, wondering what it meant

To come, after long months, at rosy dawn,
Into the placid blue of some great bay,
Treading the quiet water like a fawn
Ere yet the morning haze was blown away,
A rose-flushed figure putting aside the grey,
And anchoring there before the city smoke
Rose, or the church-bells rang, or men awoke.

And then, in the first light, to see grow clear
That long-expected haven filled with strangers,
Alive with men and women; see and hear
Its clattering market and its money-changers;
And hear the surf beat, and be free from dangers,
And watch the crinkled ocean blue with calm
Drowsing beneath the Trade, beneath the palm.

Hungry for that he worked; the hour went by
And still the wind grew, still the clipper strode;
And now a darkness hid the western sky,
And sprays came flicking off at the wind's goad.
She stumbled now, feeling her sail a load.
The mate gazed hard to windward, eyed his sail,
And said the Horn was going to flick her tail.

Boldly he kept it on her till she staggered,
But still the wind increased; it grew, it grew,
Darkening the sky, making the water haggard;
Full of small snow the mighty wester blew.
"More fun for little fish-hooks," sighed the crew.
They eyed the taut topgallants stiff like steel;
A second hand was ordered to the wheel.

DAUBER

The captain eyed her aft, sucking his lip,
Feeling the sail too much, but yet refraining
From putting hobbles on the leaping ship,
The glad sea-shattering stallion, halter-straining,
Wind-musical, uproarious and complaining:
But, in a gust, he cocked his finger, so:
"You'd better take them off, before they go."

All saw. They ran at once without the word.
"Leeay, Leeay!" loud rang the clewline cries.
Sam in his bunk within the half-deck heard,
Stirred in his sleep and rubbed his drowsy eyes.
"There go the lower to'gallants." Against the skies
Rose the thin bellying strips of leaping sail.
The Dauber was the first man over the rail.

Three to a mast they ran; it was a race.
"God!" said the mate, "that Dauber, he can go."
He watched the runners with an upturned face,
Over the futtocks struggling heel to toe,
Up to the topmast crosstrees into the blow,
Where the three sails were leaping. "Dauber wins!"
The yards were reached and now the race begins.

Which three will furl their sail first and come down?
Out to the yard-arm for the leech goes one,
His hair blowing flagwise from a hatless crown,
His hands at work like fever to be done.
Out of the gale a fiercer fury spun.
The three sails leaped together, yanking high
Like talons darting up to clutch the sky.

The Dauber on the foretopgallant yard
Was at the weather-arm; he was the first
To wrestle with the canvas bellying hard,
Bulged by the shrieking wester's bitter burst.
He got his leech in, while a comrade cursed
The lead of the buntlines and, with oaths, observed:
"The eye of the outer jib-stay isn't served."

"No?" said the Dauber. "No," the man replied.
They heaved, stowing the sail, not looking round,
Panting, but full of life and eager-eyed;
The gale roared at them with its iron sound.
"That's you," the Dauber said. His gasket wound
Swift round the yard, binding the sail in bands.
There came a gust, the sail leaped from his hands

So that he saw it high above him, grey,
And there his mate was falling; quick he clutched
An arm in oilskins swiftly snatched away.
A voice said "Christ!" a quick shape stooped and touched,
Chain struck his hands, ropes shot, the sky was smutched
With vast black fires that ran, that fell, that furled,
And then he saw the mast, the small snow hurled,

The fore topgallant yard far, far aloft,
And blankness settling on him and great pain,
And snow beneath his fingers wet and soft,
And topsail-sheet-blocks shaking at the chain.
He knew it was he who had fallen; then his brain
Swirled in a circle while he watched the sky.
Infinite multitudes of snow blew by.

"I thought it was Tom who fell," his brain's voice said.
"Down on the bloody deck," the captain screamed.
The multitudinous little snowflakes sped.
His pain was real enough, but all else seemed.
Si with a bucket ran, the water gleamed,
Tilting upon him, others came, the mate . . .
They knelt with eager eyes like things that wait

For other things to come. He saw them there.
"It will go on," he murmured, watching Si.
Colours and sounds seemed mixing in the air.
The pain was stunning him and the wind went by.
"More water," said the mate. "Here, bosun, try;
Ask if he's got a message. Hell! he's gone.
Here, Dauber, Paints." He said, "It will go on."

Not knowing his meaning rightly, but he spoke
With the intenseness of a fading soul
Whose share of Nature's fire turns to smoke,
Whose hand on Nature's wheel loses control.
The eager faces glowered red like coal;
They glowed, the great storm glowed, the sails, the mast.
"It will go on," he cried aloud, and passed.

Those from the yard came down to tell the tale.
"He almost had me off," said Tom. "He slipped.
There come one hell-of-a jump-like from the sail.
He clutched at me and almost had me pipped.
He caught my 'ris'band, but the oilskin ripped.
It tore clean off. Look here. I was near gone.
I made a grab to catch him; so did John.

"I caught his arm. My God! I was near done.
He almost had me over: it was near.
He hit the ropes and grabbed at every one."
"Well," said the mate, "We cannot leave him here.
Run, Si, and get the half-deck table clear;
We'll lay him there. Catch hold there, you, and you.
He's dead, poor son, there's nothing more to do."

Night fell, and all night long the Dauber lay
Covered upon the table; all night long
The pitiless storm exulted at her prey,
Huddling the waters with her icy thong.
But to the covered shape she did no wrong;
He lay under the sailcloth. Bell by bell
The night wore through; the stars rose, the stars fell.

Blowing most pitiless cold out of clear sky,
The wind roared all night long; and all night through
The green seas on the deck went washing by,
Flooding the half-deck; bitter hard it blew.
But little of it all the Dauber knew:
The sopping bunks, the floating chests, the wet,
The darkness, and the misery and the sweat.

He was off duty. So it blew all night,
And when the watches changed the men would come,
Dripping within the door to strike a light
And stare upon the Dauber lying dumb,
And say, "He come a cruel thump, poor chum."
Or "He'd a been a fine big man," or "He . . .
A smart young seaman he was getting to be."

Or, "Damn it all, it's what we've all to face. . . .
I knew another fellow, one time . . . " then
Came a strange tale of death in a strange place
Out on the sea, in ships, with wandering men.
In many ways Death puts us into pen.
The reefers came down tired and looked and slept.
Below the skylight little dribbles crept

Along the painted woodwork, glistening, slow,
Following the roll and dripping, never fast,
But dripping on the quiet form below
Like passing time talking to time long past.
And all night long "Ai, Ai!" went the wind's blast,
And creaming water swished below the pale
Unheeding body stretched below the sail.

At dawn they sewed him up, and at eight bells
They bore him to the gangway, wading deep,
Through the green-clutching, white-toothed water-hells
That flung his carriers over in their sweep.
They laid an old red ensign on the heap,
And all hands stood bareheaded, stooping, swaying,
Washed by the sea, while the old man was praying

Out of a borrowed prayer-book. At a sign
They twitched the ensign back and tipped the grating:
A creamier bubbling broke the bubbling brine,
The muffled figure tilted to the weighting,
It dwindled slowly down, slowly gyrating;
Some craned to see, it dimmed, it disappeared,
The last green milky bubble blinked and cleared.

"Mister, shake out your reefs," the captain called.
"Out topsail reefs," the mate cried; then all hands
Hurried, the great sails shook, and all hands hauled,
Singing that desolate song of lonely lands,
Of the drowned lover come in dripping bands,
Green with the wet and cold, to tell his lover
That Death was in the sea and all was over.

Fair came the falling wind; a seaman said
The Dauber was a Jonah; once again
The clipper held her course, showing red lead,
Shattering the sea tops into golden rain;
The waves bowed down before her like blown grain.
Onwards she thundered, on; her voyage was short,
Before the tier's bells rang her into port.

Cheerily they rang her in, those beating bells,
The new-come beauty stately from the sea,
Whitening the blue heave of the drowsy swells,
Treading the bubbles down: with three times three
They cheered her moving beauty in; and she
Came to her berth, so noble, so superb,
Swayed like a queen and answered to the curb.

Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft
And unbent sails in that most lovely hour,
When the light gentles and the wind is soft,
And beauty in the heart breaks like a flower.
Working aloft they saw the mountain tower
Snow to the peak; they heard the launchmen shout;
And bright along the bay the lights came out.

DAUBER

And then the night fell dark, and all night long
The pointed mountain pointed at the stars,
Frozen, alert, austere; the eagle's song
Screamed from her desolate screes and splintered scars.
On her intense crags, where the air is sparse,
The stars looked down, their many golden eyes
Watched her and burned, burned out, and came to rise.

Silent the finger of the summit stood,
Icy in pure, thin air, glittering with snows;
Then the sun's coming turned the peak to blood,
And in the rest-house the muleteers arose.
And all day long where only the eagle goes
Stones, loosened by the sun, fall: the stones falling
Fill empty gorge on gorge with echoes calling.

Nowadays

(Dedicated to the Poets' Club)

I WILL ask the reader to approach with me in fancy any great city. Let us suppose the open country to be already behind us, a sombre look has come upon the sky, a trodden look on the grass; the air has the look of brooding over some regrettable thing; the hoardings, always ugly, always false, often indecent, which have been with us all day into distant wolds, multiply here, and suddenly the mean streets rush on us. And how terrible is their meanness. The poorest cottager beyond in the country, the remote dweller in tents, even houseless wanderers, may turn at any moment, however hard their lot, to the hills, the wild wind, the heath, to something that is not in itself base, but is part of a scheme in which the stars themselves have part. But in a town! The night is a glare of factories, and the day an asset. And night and day they are reading, reading, reading—children and grown men always reading, whether they will or not. Reading, reading, reading, till they hardly even know that they read any longer. And what do they read? All that is basest. All the mean, cunning words of the advertiser praising his poisonous wares which no Government dare put down because they know that the power of the fraudulent cure is too great to be attacked either with safety or remunerative applause. So the poster stands unchecked, the literature of a people; stands in this den of man, the modern factory city, a record of man's ambition.

Surely as one looks at all these things one's mind is on a high, dangerous place, with the gulfs of pessimism all black beneath it. It is then that one turns to the poets. One sees the holy traditions, the cloak of Homer being passed reverently on. I hear them say that there are no poets nowadays, and I listen respectfully to that judgment whenever I hear men utter it, for it is no less awful a

thing than judgment upon themselves. It means that they are all alone without an interpreter. For how can one view and understand so old a thing as life or so new and strange a thing as this varying age, so full of machinery and politics, without the help of those rare minds that look, without reeling, upon essential things?

There are only two ways of understanding life: we could do it ourselves no doubt if we had the time, but threescore years and ten are not long enough; nor is the time long enough, though one add to that span twenty or twenty-five of those extra years that the Psalmist says are all labour and sorrow. There are only two ways of understanding life: one is to find some ancient folk, some age-old peasantry, and borrow from the storehouse of their wisdom which they have had leisure to fill while wars and earthquakes troubled the thrones and citadels of kings. I never hear a nursery rhyme nor an old saying but it comes to me in this age, that trade and politics have made so sordid, like a little cool breeze into a stifling town out of some far, quiet hills. And the only other way of which I know to come at the meaning of life and the scheme of man is to turn to the poets. No man in his lifetime indeed can understand it, and I do not think that any poet would claim to or would pretend to know more than any other man; but then at moments unknown, always unexpected, there comes that clear voice in his mind, and with a feeling surely of ignorance and of awe he finds himself speaking of cities he has known and byways he has trod in lands where the desert has long since covered all, coming back again to its own, where the historian can only guess and the traveller durst not go. He speaks of things that were before cities began, and of gods that walked with him in the prime of the stars. The voice passes (like the wind in the gospel of John), and he is only a man again, with a man's humiliations.

It seems to me that in some way beyond our understanding the poet, in the depth of his experience and the wide range of his knowledge, is to be compared with the many generations of a whole people rather than with individuals; and the final product of the culture of man seems to be little more than a return to a certain simplicity that was long since.

Never, as in this time it seems to me, have we so much needed guidance from the poets; for eighty years machinery has altered and increased, changing and changing again the face of England, changing our habits, our needs, our mode of life, our thoughts, our language, and our very selves. We are very proud of it, we boast of it, we are glad that we have changed quicker than others change; and what is it all for?—where are we going? I have not seen the answers in the Press; there is no clue to it in the Palace of Westminster; they do not know in either House of Parliament.

And the poets go on writing as of old. Sometimes they write of high ethereal things that are as far from us as the gates of the dawn, like that remote, unplaced, undated play, Yeats' *King's Threshold*; and sometimes they write about our daily affairs, as in Masefield's *Widow in Bye Street*. And in the one case I hear men and woman say, "Yes, I would read poetry if only poets would write about the things that interest us, the things of our own time." And in the other case they say, "It is too sordid; a poet should not write of such sordid things." Thus they speak when the poet's moth-winged fancy flits down to the very fields that they themselves, the people of this age, have slimed and made foul with gold.

And if we do not hear them, if the fashion is to be mending oleographs that the jigsaw hath eaten and not reading poetry, whence, then, shall be get our wisdom? We are removed, so terribly removed and utterly cut off, from all the simple peoples of the earth, that it is not from them that we shall learn our destiny. He would shift his pipe in his mouth if we asked one of them, and look long in front of him before he spoke; for there is no hurry in the rural places where things have gone easily, but for winter and war, since ever the quiet folk came there far back in the story of Time; he would be silent perhaps for a while before he answered, and then would speak with an accent so unfamiliar and words so unlike those hallowed only this morning by the latest editions of the daily Press that we might find something whimsical in such a man, and smile and turn away; so may Adam and Eve, as they left the garden, have found something a little uncouth in the angel's speech. Yet it seems to me, as I watch the glare of our factories, or hear the roar of our towns and the sound going

up from Progress upon her ravenous path, it seems to me that man has sailed out of his course and is steering by bad stars. And the terrible evil of it is this: that the further he goes, the harder it becomes for him to hear any voice that calls him back. I mean that this recent redundancy and elaboration of speech, of which an example is the ridiculous spectacle of modern Cabinet Ministers standing up and saying, "The answer is in the affirmative," when all they mean is "Yes"—those pompous and meaningless phrases that eke out sixpence for the needy journalist when all he had to say would fill one line at a penny; and, final horror of all, the language of the advertisement begotten of avarice and bred in America: all this so rots the mind that true and simple things come to seem false, and men no longer hear when the poet speaks. That is not the concern of the poet. It is not for him to find hearers, not for him to get wealth or ease or applause of men. It is not for him to ask why the message came to himself while other men may rest, nor even to ask whence it came, nor for what end. It is for him to work on with that flame in the mind which is the bane and blessing of the inspired. Time will bring readers—in ten years one or two, in twenty years ten or a dozen, then in a decade a hundred, then a thousand, ten thousand in ten years more, and some day millions; and still Time goes on, nor stops because we cease to imagine his progress, and the day comes when every child on the earth has perhaps one little fancy in its mind that its forbears got from the dreams of that neglected poet, which have become the world's inheritance.

"But," they will say to me, "the poet is dead." What is that to the poet? It is not for any reward that may be put into live hands that the poet works. Who knows for whom his inspiration was sent? Who knows to what end? Perhaps to guide the kings of some far-future age; and perhaps the poet is picked out from all other men as a punishment for some sin committed in other lands long, long ago, which the stars still remember.

They think that because they do not heed the poets they are right upon the course that they have chosen, right to make money by false patriotism and poisonous bread and adulterated wine, and that the poets are wrong. But

the poets are never wrong, never have erred in the history of the world, have only failed (how many times they know) to give the message, but their inspiration comes sheer from the Palace of Truth, and what they say is beautiful is so, so long as they are true to their inspiration, and what they say is damnable is already damned in heaven. They reflect what is as lakes reflect it. Can a lake reflect three trees when there are only two, or can a white bird swimming on it seem black, or a crooked branch seem straight? They cannot be wrong, for they weave their work of sincerity, beauty, and truth; and evil days are in store for those prosperous cities that turn away from these things. Let them work on; it is not for them to find readers. But when the poet comes to an age that will not heed his words, let him shake off that dust that is flesh and pass hence; let him go back whither he has come; and not in the day of judgment only shall it better for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that age, but in its own time its own people shall eke out their own damnation—for what is it to hate poetry? It is to have no little dreams and fancies, no holy memories of golden days, to be unmoved by serene midsummer evenings or dawn over wild lands, singing or sunshine, little tales told by the fire a long while since, glow-worms and briar-rose; for of all these things and more is poetry made. It is to be cut off for ever from the fellowship of great men that are gone; to see men and women without their haloes and the world without its glory; to miss the meaning lurking behind common things, like elves hiding in flowers; it is to beat one's hands all day against the gates of Fairyland, and to find that they are shut and the country empty and its kings gone hence.

Perhaps I have drawn something too grim a picture. Certain it is that poetry does not pay, and certain that many judge it for this reason and find poetry wanting. Yet no bad custom endures for very long or survives the laughter of posterity, and I think there are signs already of changes coming. It is not wonderful that for one or two generations (and how short are one or two generations in the long, long story of Man), it is not wonderful that for a little while we have turned Materialists: matter has been so marvellous. No record in the histories of the world shows any age in which matter has done such astounding

things as in the last hundred years—that is to say, matter to the glory of matter, and matter exulting in material things. I do not think that a motor or great factory is any more wonderful than the cathedrals of England, or Notre Dame or St. Mark's, or those tremendous dreams of bygone kings that marble and granite have realised in Egypt; but matter is subservient to the spirit in these. Never before to-day has it been so great for its own sake. What will it be to-morrow? Shall we always go on toiling and blackening our sky to make machines ever more wonderful still, or shall we not turn from matter because it has failed us? It has had its turn, we have worshipped it all these many years; it has given us swiftness; Man can move now by mono-rail at a hundred miles an hour, and it is not fast enough—all the old troubles, old cares, old sicknesses keep pace with us: aye, and the new diseases and new cares too. Is it not time to turn away from it? Our triumph over matter has been matter's triumph over us, and, like a great antagonist, matter cares not that we think we have won the game that we have lost. Look at us after our triumph; look at the stunted figures of the Midlands; look at the careworn faces; look at the full and terrible asylums every year growing fuller; look at the feeble, frantic politicians trying to soothe blind, angry, inarticulate labour. Man is become so very, very wise, has so closely studied the papers; he is as wise as some old and learned professor caught in a crowd and not not knowing which way to turn.

The soul is not soothed by a hundred miles an hour, the mind is not made easy in shops in Bond Street by four hundred and five hundred per cent. profits, nor yet may happiness be found for certain even by all the wickedness of honoured and wealthy vendors of patent drugs and adulterated food. With such men as these last, money will always remain; but more and more every year I hope we may find men turning away towards simplicity and beauty, realising that though money *may* buy happiness, yet it is only a medium, while the poets have on sale in exchange for nothing those ideals, fancies, and phantasies out of which happiness is made. For not a penny is earned, not a thing done but it was to help to carry out some man's ambition to make some little fancy a little easier; and

men's ambitions and men's fancies are the poet's raw material, and it is only short-sighted, unpractical millionaires that think that the stamped gold coins which they give their days in exchange for are at all an end in themselves, or that fail to see that that very happiness that they hope their money may buy is often thrown away for the sake of making that money. O all ye business men, praise ye money, for I sometimes think it is all you ever get. It may be that before we grow simpler and sincerer we may grow even worse. A substitute is yet to be found for water, as there has been for beer and salt; it is yet to be widely advertised, sold, and drunk like many another wickedness, but people must some day turn from all these things and go one by one to the camp where the good men dwell—not the poets only, but all who do work for its own sake and do it well. There are two great divisions among them, the true and the sham; I judge them by their works. In one class are all the snobs, all the pretenders, the writers of advertisements, the keepers of shops (except such as are honest), the makers of antique furniture and the buyers of it, the manufacturers of all things that are meant to look what they are not, the lovers of ugliness, not all the sinners, but all that sin meanly for the sake of gain, however honoured their stations. And in the other class are the men with spades, men near to the fields and natural like the harvests, soldiers and sailors, patriots, not politicians, common labourers, not labour-leaders, policemen, kings, and all (though happily the list is too long) who do any work well for the sake of the work, and not so as to sell it at an unjust price to the first ignorant customer. In this class are the poets. And this whole class should hold fast together to resist the false that is spreading over the world—false knowledge, false work, false food. The rough seafaring man may be ignorant of the poet, but they have the bond between them of work well done, which sets them utterly apart from the mean makers of cough-cures, and Cabinet Ministers answering in the affirmative.

And of such a class the poets should be the leaders; for of all materials for labour, dreams are the hardest, and the artificer in ideas is the chief of workers, who out of nothing will make a piece of work that may stop a child

from crying or lead nations to higher things. For what is it to be a poet? It is to see at a glance the glory of the world, to see beauty in all its forms and manifestations, to feel ugliness like a pain, to resent the wrongs of others as bitterly as one's own, to know mankind as others know single men, to know Nature as botanists know a flower, to be thought a fool, to hear at moments the clear voice of God.

DUNSANY.

White Life

By Stijn Streuvels*

Her life flowed on as a little brook flows under grass on a Sunday noon in summer, flowed on in calm seclusion, far from the bustle of the crowd, hidden, steadily, uninterrupted, save by ever-recurring little incidents, peacefully approaching old age. She sat in her little white room, behind the muslin curtains, making lace. Her cottage stood a little way back from the street, shining behind a neatly-raked little flower-garden.

The door was always shut and the curtains carefully drawn. Inside, all was very clean: smooth, bare walls and the ceiling washed with milk-white chalk through which shone a soft touch of blue; and this bright cleanliness contrasted soberly with the things that hung on the wall. The chairs and furniture stood placed with care, as though nailed to the floor; over the mantel hung the copper Christ, a thin, elongated figure of Our Lord, with its sharp projections which shone when the sun touched them: a little figure which, so long dead, hung there so firmly nailed and looked so calmly from out of the small dark shadow-lines of its face.

The stove stood freshly blackened, with the waved white sand on its polished pipe.† Over the door of the bedroom steps‡ hung the glass case with the waxen image of Our

* Translated from the West-Flemish by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. Copyright U.S.A., 1904, by Paul R. Reynolds.

† The Flemish stove is connected with the chimney by a flat pipe, on which the plates and other utensils are heated. On Sundays, the stove, the pipe and all are blacked and polished with black-lead and turpentine; and it is an old custom of neat housewives to powder the stove-pipe with white sand from the dunes. The sand is allowed to run through a little opening in the hand in a series of fine wavy lines, forming a delicate pattern on the black pipe.

‡ The bedroom in the Flemish cottages, behind the kitchen or living-room, is over the cellar. The cellar, however, is not entirely underground, and is lighted by a very low window at the back. Consequently, the floor of the bedroom is a little higher than that of the living-room and is approached by a flight of two or three steps.

Lady, a girlish figure clad in broad white folds, with bright-red, cherry cheeks, smiling sweetly upon a doll which she carried in her arms. On the other wall was a glaring framed print, in which a Child Jesus romped with curly-headed angels in a motley green wood, with behind it a sunny perspective gleaming with paradisaical delights.

From the ceiling, in a white cage, hung the canary, which hopped from one perch to the other, all day long, without ever singing. On the window-seat, behind the little curtains, blossomed tall geraniums and phlox, which, through the mesh of the muslin curtains, sent a blissful fragrance through the room.

Life went its monotonous gait, measured by the slow tick of the hanging clock, that big, stupid, laughing face which so pitilessly turned its two unequal fingers round and round. Outside, close by, went the steel blows of the smith's hammer or the biting file that grated against her wall.

The sun that laughed so pleasantly through the windows and came and put all those things in a white gleaming light beamed right through into her little white soul: it was like that of a child still, had remained innocent, never been soiled or troubled; and, now that the bad storm-time was over, it lay still in the passionless restfulness of waning life, quite taken up with all manner of harmless occupations, devotions, and acquired ways of an old, God-fearing woman-person. Her face, which was wreathed in a round, white goffered cap, had the smooth yellow waxen pallor of the statue of Our Lady, in the church, and her features the severe, sober kindliness of nuns'. She was dressed in modest, stiffly-falling folds of unrumpled lilac silk, like queens in old prints.

She spent those long, quiet days at her lace-pillow. That was her only amusement, her treasure: that half-round arch in smooth, blue paper on the wooden pillow-stool, occupied by a swarm of copper pins with coloured glass heads and of finely-turned wooden bobbins, with slender necks and notched bodies, hanging side by side from fine white threads or heaped up behind a steel bodkin. All this array of pins, holes, drawers, and trays had for her its own form and meaning, a small world in which she knew

her way so very well. Her deft white fingers knew how to throw, change, catch and pick up those bobbins so nimbly, so swiftly; she stuck her pins, which were to give the thread its lie and form, so accurately and surely; and, under her hand, the lace grew slowly and imperceptibly into a light thread net-work, grew with the leaves and flowers of her geraniums and phlox and the silent course of time.

'Twas quite a feast when, in the evening, she wound off the ravelled end and carefully examined the white web. She closely followed all the knots, curves and twists of those transparent little veins, and 'twas with regret that she rolled up the lace again and put it away in the drawer.

When all her peaceful thoughts had been fully pondered, when all that life of every day, all that even round of happenings, like little white flakes floating in the sunny sky, had pushed past through the thought-chambers of her soul and the light began to fail outdoors and in, she took her rosary and prayed, for hours on end, slowly telling the smooth beads between her fingers until, when it grew dark, she started awake and became aware that for some time she had been telling the strokes of the smith's hammer on the other side of the wall. Then she laid herself between the white sheets and tried to sleep.

Two days ago, the grid of her stove broke and, to-day, she had taken it to be mended; she had been to the smith's and now she could not get out of her mind what she had seen there: a black cave, like an oven, down three steps; a dark hole hung and filled on every side with black iron tools; and, amid all this jumble, an anvil and, in the red glow from the dancing light of the smithy fire, a small, stunted, black little chap, hidden out of knowledge in that gloom; a bent, thin little man wound in a leathern apron and with a black face, from which a pair of good-humoured eyes peered out at her, through the shining glasses of his copper-rimmed spectacles, like two little lights in the dark. She had gone down those three steps, looking round shyly, afraid of getting dirty; had explained her business to that impish little chap; and had then hastily fled from that hell. Now it seemed to her that those two eyes had looked at her so kindly, and she wondered how anyone could live in such a hole and be a Christian creature . . . and yet that smith looked as if he had a good heart.

The next day, she was thinking again of that little man and his dark, haunted hole, and she sniffed the scent of her geraniums with a new pleasure and looked with more gladness at her trim little dwelling and her lace-pillow. She now enjoyed, realised, with all the sensual luxury of her soul, that peaceful life of hers, something like that of the yellow waxen Virgin high up there on the wall, under her glass shade. And yet she was sorry for her good neighbour: it must be so dreary alone and in all that dirt. . . . She worked at her lace, prayed and tried to think of nothing more.

He brought the new grid home himself. At first, she was shy with that man: she got up, went to the stove, turned again and only now and then dared look at the smith from under her eyes. He was wrapped up in his work, stood bent over the stove and tried to fix the grid. Seen like that in the light, the little chap looked quite different to her: he was no longer young, his breath came quickly; but in all that he did there was something so friendly, so kindly, almost well-mannered, that went oddly with his dirty clothes and his black face. The little smith was known in the village as a lively person, who led a lonely life, but who was able also to divert a company: he knew his customers and knew how to manage them all. Here he took good care not to dirty the floor: he spat his tobacco-juice into the coal-box and touched nothing with his hands. When at last the grid was fixed, he stayed talking a little: he spoke of her nice little life among all those white things; paid her a compliment on her pretty flowers and shining copper; and then came close to look at her lace-pillow. Lastly, seeing that she was not at her ease, that she answered his remarks so shortly and hesitatingly, he gave a push to his cap, refused to say what she owed him, and was gone with a skip and a jump.

One Sunday, after vespers, he came again, bowed politely, fetched a bit of paper out of his waistcoat-pocket and sat down on a chair by the stove. This visit annoyed her: with the quickness with which small-minded people weigh and think over a matter, her eyes went to the window to see if anybody had observed him coming in and was likely to set evil tongues a-clacking. It was almost bound to be so; and, to keep her honour safe, she opened her door,

door, mumbling something about "warm weather" and "the tobacco-smoke which made her cough."

She went to her room, fetched some money and paid the bill. The smith sat where he was, knocked out his little stone pipe and put it in his inside pocket; he did not look at his money, and, in his hoarse little voice, began to talk of quite common things: of wind and weather and the current news of the village; always chatting in the same tone, a jumble of long, breathless statements. From this he went on to his dreary, lonely life, that monotonous quiet and the danger of thieves, sickness and sudden death. She said not a word, but, against the bright window-curtains, the sharp, heavy profile of her face, together with the flutes of her white cap, went up and down in a continual nodding, in assent to all that he said. At the end, she took pleasure in hearing him talk, nor now looked upon that clean washed face of his as at all so ugly. It even did her good to see someone sitting there who came to enliven the monotony of that long Sunday evening. By her leave, he had lighted a fresh pipe and now she sat sniffing up that unaccustomed smell, which rose in little puffs from behind the stove and floated round the room, filling it with long rows of blue curls. 'Twas as if she were overcome by that quite new smell of tobacco and she felt inclined to sleep; she stood up, to get rid of that slackness, shut the front-door and, without thinking what she was doing, asked if he would have some coffee. He nodded, gladly.

She put the kettle on and got the coffee-pot ready, fetched out the best cups and spoons and the white sugar. When the steam came rushing from the spout, she poured water on the coffee and they sat down, one on each side of the table, to sip the savoury drink in tiny draughts. 'Twas long since she had felt so comfortable and for the first time she thought with dislike of her lonely life. 'Twas late when he went home; she came with him to the door . . . and saw black figures that strolled past in the street and perhaps had seen him leave. She had bad dreams all night: the people pointed their fingers at her and slanderous tongues spread ugly things about her. The whole of the next day her thoughts were in the smithy; she swept the pavement more carefully and further than usual, went now and then and looked out of window, and her little

curtains were left open with a split in the middle. Yesterday, she had forgotten to give the canary fresh water to drink. The people looked at her in the street; two or three God-fearing gossips had let her walk home alone. This gave her great pain; 'twas as though a heavy load were now weighing day and night on her breast; and yet she was not sorry for what had happened. Those were little things which could not make her forget her content. She said her prayers and did her little duties with as much care as before and lived on, alone.

On Sunday, she went to church very early and prayed long: it did her so much good, that delightful whispering with God, that sweet kind Lord Who listened to her so patiently and always sent her away with fresh courage, strengthened to walk on bravely along life's irksome way. Sometimes she was frightened at her behaviour! She was gnawed by a reproachful thought: that she had left the straight path, that she no longer lived for God alone, that she was forgetting her dear saints and busy with sinful thoughts. And yet, when she carefully considered everything, nothing had happened that seemed to her blameworthy; all that change in her life had come as of itself and in spite of herself; and really, after all, there was no harm in it. She prayed for that good man, who certainly needed her spiritual aid: he went so seldom to church and lived in such a dreary, black hole. Her prayers and interest would for sure bring him to a better frame of mind. And yet she must watch, keep strong, avoid the dangers; her honour was a tender thing, and people were wicked. She stayed longer than usual in the confessional and offered special prayers to every saint in the church.

When she was back at home, she began her little Sunday duties: the lace-pillow was put away that day and she did nothing but arrange things, put things in their places, gather a fresh nosegay for the porcelain vase before Our Lady's statue and see to her cooking. She picked the withered leaves from the geraniums, bound the branches of the phlox to the trellis, and gave them fresh water from a little flowered can. She was specially fond of her little pot of musk: it stood opposite her chair on the window-seat, carefully set in a rush cage, stuck into the earth and fastened at the top with a thread. Sometimes she took it

on her lap, bent her face over it and sniffed the pleasant smell in long draughts, until she was almost drunk with it.

In the afternoon, she sat down at the window and read her Thomas à Kempis, Then all was quite still: no hammering behind the wall, no boys in the street, only the soft tapping of the canary in his food-trough and the tick of the pendulum of the clock; everything was quiet as though in an enchanted sleep. The sun glowed through the geranium-leaves and cast on the red-tiled floor a broad, round shadow, which took the whole afternoon to creep from the legs of the stove to the front-door.

The flies buzzed round on the rafters of the ceiling or ran along the cracks of the white scoured table. Her thoughts wandered wearily and lazily through the wise maxims of her book and she sometimes sat peering at the funny shape of a coloured initial which, after long looking, became such a silly figure, that no longer looked in the least like a letter, but something in the form of a vice. . . . The lines of print ran into one another, the maxims said all sort of foolish things to her, her eyes closed, her head nodded and she sank, with all those peaceful things, into perfect rest.

After dinner, the smith had had a sleep; then he washed his face, put on his best clothes and went past her window to vespers. In the evening, she saw him again when he went to the customers for a pot of beer: this time he gave her a friendly nod.

For her, Sunday passed like all the other days; she prayed longer and closed her shutter earlier for fear of the drunkards. After saying a long row of graces which she knew by heart, she went to her bedroom. In the stuffy air of that closed upper chamber, she lay thinking. She was not sleepy and it was nice, in this evening stillness, covered in her white sheets, to lie looking with her eyes through the split in the white curtains at the moon which hung shining outside.

Now she gave free scope to her thoughts, until all of that had again been pondered round and pondered out. Then it became so funny to her: 'twas as if she were long dead now and floating in a pale and fragrant air in the company of sweet saints and angels. But, 'twas oh, so hazy

and indistinct! It always escaped her when she wanted to enjoy it more closely and to give the thing a name.

'Twas night when the smith came home, a little tipsy, deceived by his great thirst and the double effect of the beer in that warm weather. He was very cheery, without really knowing why; something like a soft buzzing fire ran through all his body and made him tingle with happiness. They had chaffed him that evening about the old maid next door and he now felt inclined just to tell her about it.

Wasn't it a shame for two people to lie here so quietly and drearily, parted by a bit of a wall, when they could have been amusing each other? . . . His white neighbour was sure to be asleep by now . . . and if he only dared . . . and, quicker, indeed, than he meant, he gave three little taps on the wall and lay listening, all agog. . . . Three like little taps answered! This was so unexpected that at first he sat wondering whether he could believe his ears; then he began to swim and sprawl in his bed, bit his teeth so as not to shout out his overflowing delight, and started banging on the wall, this time with his fists. It was too late to-night: to-morrow, he would go to her and ask her . . . and then they would both . . . and he would no longer be alone, always alone, and would have someone to care for him, to look after him. . . . In all this happiness he drowsed off gently, rocked in another world, like a little wax doll in a pale-blue paper box.

She had started out of her sleep at those three taps and had answered, not knowing why; then she had got frightened at that wild man behind her wall, had jumped out of bed and struck a light and sat waiting until the noise stopped; then she commended her soul into the Lord's hands and fell softly asleep.

The first time that he went to see her, he found the door shut. Once, when he met her in the street, she kept her eyes carefully cast down and passed him without bowing. Her curtains remained drawn and she never came to the door now. He went home and sat musing on his anvil. All his plan was blown to bits; he found himself sadly duped and turned red with anger when people spoke of his dear neighbour. He hammered and filed from morning till night; and she must now be making her lace.

Time pushed past, divided into like days, along a

smooth road that led down the mountain-slope of summer. The leaves fell from the geraniums and phlox. The neatly cut-out paper fly-catcher was put away and the lamp hung up in its place. With the sad, short days came the grey, misty sky, the dripping, dismal rain, and the white snow. The village lay dead for half the day, dark, with here and there a little ray of light gleaming through the shutters.

And it became gradually drearier for her: that calm rest, in which she had once found such a pure delight, was now a heavy weariness. She longed for change, for something different which she could not justly define, or else to live again as before, alone and with nothing but herself. She had struggled and fought to rid herself of that obsession, but it followed her everywhere: she saw him go by, even when her eyes were turned away on the lace-pillow, the stove, the chair on which he had sat; and that constant hammering and scratching behind her wall; everywhere she saw those two kind eyes behind the copper rims of his spectacles, and she sometimes caught herself contentedly tracing the good-natured features of his little black face. She had prayed more than ever and evoked quite new saints; and now she let herself drift along at God's pleasure, no longer even thinking of her weakness. Perhaps she was the instrument of a Blessed Providence, destined blindly to do good.

The little curtains had long been pushed apart again, and each time that she heard approaching footsteps, her heart went beating and her eyes looked eagerly to see if, by chance . . . it was not he.

Sometimes, an anxious fluttering drove her to the front-door, where she stood looking round for a while and then, ashamed of herself, went indoors again. Quite outside her custom, she now made use of her glass: in the middle of her work, she went to see if the two glossy black tresses lay neatly on her forehead and if the ribbons of her cap were properly tied and fastened. She put on her clothes more carefully and folded and refolded her kerchief until it enclosed her body in a pretty shape. From before the moment of starting for church, her heart began to beat; she shut her garden-gate more noisily and stepped loudly along the pavement until she came to the smith's first window, firmly resolved this time at least to look up and

say good-morning; but she always met someone who noticed her, and she was in church by the time that, with a sigh, she had put off her intention until the next day.

At night, in bed, she lay thinking over all those little events; and 'twas a glad day or a sad day for her according as she had more or less often caught sight of the little smith.

One evening, after Benediction, she saw him come walking under the trees of the churchyard. Not a soul saw them. Now she must really have courage; but again the blood came to her throat, and she felt that once again 'twould lead to nothing. He had just looked round before she came up to him, and then he sat down on the stone step before the Calvary, as though he wanted to chat with her there at his ease:

"Good-evening, Sofie," he said, smiling. "Have you been to say your prayers. Don't you ever say a little one for me? I want it so badly: my little soul's as black as my apron, and I can't even read a prayer-book. . . ."

He made all this speech in a soft, fondling little tone, and then sat smirking to see what she would say. There was nothing that she longed for more than to save his soul:

"Can you say the rosary?" she asked.

"Yes, but I haven't one."

"Would you like me to give you one?"

"Oh, rather . . . if you'll be so good!"

She bent close to him and whispered in his ear:

"Come and fetch it, to-morrow evening, when it's dark."

They walked together through the quiet, twilight churchyard and, with a hearty "Good evening," went home well pleased with themselves.

For her it was an endless day; all the time she stood considering what she should say to him. He would come and sit smoking there again behind the stove. Already she heard his pleasant, whispering talk and saw his kind, upturned glance. She moved about restlessly to set everything in order. The shutters were closed quite early and the lamp burning. Now she went and had one more look outside and it was pitch dark, with never a moon.

On the stroke of eight, the door opened: he was there, with his Sunday jacket on, his red scarf and his shoes. She was most friendly, but did not at first know how to begin the conversation.

He lit his pipe and snuffled some news of the village and of people who were married, sick or dead. She made coffee, turned up the lamp and opened the door of her bedroom to give an outlet to the tobacco-smoke. Straight opposite him, deep in the half darkness, he saw all that show of white: against the wall stood the bed, under a white canopy of curtains hanging in folds, set off with a white ball-fringe; also a praying-desk with velvet cushions, above which was an image of the Sacred Heart, with gold flowers, and, hanging from a brass chain, a perpetual light glimmering in a little red glass; and, all around, on the white walls, little statues and pictures, like a devout little tabernacle ashine with cleanliness. They drank their fragrant cup of coffee and nibbled lumps of white sugar.

"And my rosary?" he asked.

She fetched it out of the drawer of her lace pillow and came and sat close to him to teach him how to say it:

"Here, at the little cross, the I Believe in God the Father; then, at each big bead, an Our Father; and, at the little ones, a Hail Mary."

He sat with his legs drawn under his chair, with one hand at his chin, listening good-humouredly, and, with a smile, repeated all she taught him. Her eyes shone, with happiness. Now the talk went easily on church matters and all the things of her pious little life: she showed him the pictures in her prayer-book and explained all the attributes of the saints and told long stories of their lives and martyrdoms.

He, also, told her of his youth, when he made his First Communion and was the best little man in the whole village. It was striking ten when he went home. And he had promised to come and listen to her again.

Every evening, when it grew dark, he sat peeping to see if there was no one in the street, and then cautiously crept in through her gate. He brought her old books from his loft; and, while he smoked his pipe, she lit the candle

before the statue of Our Lady and started talking, very gently, so as not to be heard outside. She read whole chapters out of Thomas à Kempis and the "Pious Pilgrim," the "Dove amongst the Rocks," the "Spiritual Bridegroom," or the "Sacred Meditations." They sat there for hours at a time gazing at each other and smiling. When it grew late, she went and looked outside and, when the moment was favourable, she carefully let him out. She thanked Our Lord for making her so happy, and she prayed often that it might last and she win the smith's soul for Heaven and that their doing might all the same be kept hidden from wicked people.

St. Eloi's Day is the holiday of smiths and husbandmen. In the morning, the farmers all went together to Mass, and thence, after a glass, to settle their yearly reckoning at the smith's. At noon there was a big dinner at the inn. They ate much and drank more, and, from afternoon till late in the evening, the smiths' men and peasants loafed along the street and sang trivial songs. The steadiest of them walked about talking, from one tavern to the other. They were nearly all drunk. She sat peeping at it from behind her curtain and she was vexed at all this wantonness and rather glad that she had not yet seen "him" anywhere. She said her evening prayers and was just going to bed when she heard the door open and the smith stepped in.

He carried his pipe upside down in his mouth, his eyes looked bewildered and his speech was incoherent. She had never seen him like that, and she was frightened at his strange gestures. She wanted him to sit down, but he came up to her with his arms open, as if to catch hold of her. She stepped back in affright, pushed him away from her. His breath stank of drink and his thin legs tottered under him. She began to beseech him, that it was late and that he should go home and that people would know. . . . But his eyes looked at her roguishly and, with bent head and outstretched arms, he kept on trying to come closer. Filled with dread, she wavered away behind the table and chairs, whining:

"If you please, if you please, Sander,* go home; you frighten me!"

* Alexander.

Suddenly, he nipped out the flame of the lamp with his fingers. It was quite dark.

"Sander, Sander! What do you want? Heavens! He's drunk! And I am here all alone! Lord God, St. Catherine, help!"

He still spoke not a word, but uttered ugly growls; and she heard his hands rub and grope along the wall, against herself. She pulled open the door of her bedroom and fled up the stairs and fell in a heap in the corner beside her bed. There she sat waiting, out of breath. . . . Yes, his heavy shoes had found the steps and, still growling, he entered the room. He felt the bed, lay down flat on his stomach and reached out with his arms; then he found her sitting sighing. She felt those two weedy arms grasp her and was caught in them as in an iron band. She moaned and screamed for help. His dirty, slimy mouth pressed her lips . . . and then she felt herself sink away, out of the world. The people who heard the cries came to see what was the matter. They hauled the drunkard outside and laid her on the bed. When they saw that she was better, they went away again.

She lay stretched out slackly in the dark. First, still quite overcome, as though drunk with sleep, she slowly, through that dim whirl of stormy thoughts, came to understand what had happened: all her misfortune, which yawned before her like a deep, black well. She was ashamed, disgusted with herself and felt a great aversion, a loathing for all the world: people were a pack of lustful pigs. . . . And he too: that was over now, suddenly over, for good and all. . . . And he . . . no, he had deceived her, grievously defiled her. And now to have to go on living like that! It was done past recall: she was punished for her trustfulness . . . and those same kind eyes and that friendly face; only yesterday, they had said their evening prayer together and so devoutly! Oh, 'twas such a pity! And what would people say? . . . And the priest? . . . And Our Lord and all His dear saints? . . . She fell into ever deeper despair and saw never a way out. Very far away shone her pure little life of former days, her white and peaceful little soul floating in that unruffled blue sanctity, in that fragrant twilight of evening after evening . . . and all this he had now crushed in one moment and

stamped to pieces. And he was dead to her, with whom she had dreamed so sweetly and lived in glad expectation. In her wretchedness, she was left stark alone, abandoned like a poor little child in the snow. She plunged her face into the white sheets and cried: she would have liked to pine away there, in that good darkness, and never, never see daylight again.

Fallen among Thieves

By G. S. Street

It happened years and years ago, but I admit I was twice old enough to know better. That is why I have not written about it before. The few friends in whom I confided agreed in saying I was the greatest fool they had ever heard of, and agreed in counselling silence on my part. One of them drew for me the diverting figure I should make in a law court if I prosecuted. "I suppose," the cross-examining counsel would say, "you consider yourself a man of the world?" (Roars of laughter, in which the judge joins.) I decided not to prosecute, and for the same reason have abstained from writing. But two reasons impel me now. One is commercial: I don't see why I should not get a little of my own back, to the extent of a few guineas if I can, with my thieves for material; and they can hardly complain: every man to his trade. The other reason is artistic or scientific: people who suffer what I suffered are as a rule callow boys or intoxicated idiots, whereas I am a practised writer with some interest in psychology and can give the world such a reasoned study of the thieves and their mentality as it may find quite interesting to have. It is almost unique for this sort of villain to catch an articulate victim.

And after all, was I such an unmitigated fool as my best friends said? If it had happened on a steamer crossing the Atlantic, or among strangers in a railway carriage, my temporary insanity had been proved. But I had met the arch thief in respectable society. You either suspect everything or nothing; so far as I knew I had never been in the company of professional thieves before, and it simply did not occur to me. . . . Oh, yes; as you read the narrative you will say that this, that, and the other were most suspicious circumstances, but that is only because your mind will have been prepared. . . . Really and truly, though

they brought off their coup, it was the thieves who were the essential fools in the matter for thinking I was a likely subject for their enterprise or had anything for them to steal. But I will make a beginning with the plain facts.

He was a jovial little Irishman, who bore a well-known surname and had been in a good regiment. Of course, there's Thackeray's Captain Rook at once, but how was I to know? He was a little on the noisy side, perhaps I might say a little on the vulgar side, but I have never been exclusive, and, to be sure, my life had been much less amusing than it has been had I always shied at everybody imperfectly bred. Besides, he was rather subdued when I first met him, being, as I said, in a respectable house. His sojourn of a few hours there was no fault of my host's, who was quite ignorant of his profession. It's strange—is it not?—how some blacklegs with a good start contrive to keep a footing here and there. Their exclusion is comparatively slow, I suppose, partly from old friends refusing to believe the worst as long as they possibly can, partly from those who know it shirking the disagreeable trouble of speaking. But fancy the nerves of the blackleg still clinging to a reputable rope or two! His eager look when he goes into a room to see if there is anyone there who knows too much, his anxiety when someone mentions another who *does* know, his innumerable perturbations! With what joy must he find himself among "the boys" again, frankly predatory! All I saw on this occasion, however, was a friendly little man who amused me with stories of the camp and the course. He on his side must have made up his mind that I was a fool—about which I say nothing—and also a man with money, which was silly of him. The least inquiry would have told him I hadn't a shilling. . . . I met him in London a few days later, when he told me he was at a loose end, being kept there by business a day longer than he had intended, and that I should be doing him a kindness by dining with him. I accepted, and he named an expensive restaurant. Here again the wise folk told me too late that a fellow of that kind would never waste a dinner without an object, but I had never lived with people who order their social lives on such strict business principles, and was rather flattered by being liked so much at first sight by a man of a type

so different from my own. I went, and there were two other men, whom he had met by chance that afternoon, he said—all in his character of expansive friendliness. One was a slim young man with quite a jolly laugh and something of a frank appeal about him, the other an elderly person with something of a racy humour: I think he said he had been a doctor. Apart from one's intimate men-friends, or men one has wished to meet to talk over a subject of mutual interest, men alone make dull dinner-parties, in my opinion. But there was so much *bonhomie* and joviality, a little too noisy as between themselves, but always delicately respectful to me, about my three scoundrel convives that this dinner passed off very pleasantly indeed. Really they "played" me with great skill, and I think a less innocent person than I would have been lulled and flattered. I had always imagined card-sharpers as unattractive, weather-beaten fellows, bouncing timid youths, asking ferociously if their honour was doubted and all that; these three, throughout the evening, never once missed their *rôle* of careless companions bent on mutual enjoyment only. And I think this attitude was not entirely a pretence. You see, the occasion was an ordinary one in their professional lives and cannot have been a strain on them; probably I was agreeable enough to them; I believe they enjoyed their dinner without preoccupation. In so far as they were artists, however, carefully humouring and pleasing, I make them my compliment; they did it exceedingly well. If their real vocation had suddenly been apparent to me I am sure I should have finished that dinner in peace—and with even greater pleasure, for I would have got them to talk of their adventures and the tricks and customs of their trade. That, too, would have been cheaper. Alas!

When the dinner was over it was too late to go to any theatre or music-hall, and the youngest of them suggested that his flat was near and commodious and we might smoke another cigar there, and thither we went. What about a mild game of bridge? I really believe it was I, I myself, who, disliking the prospect of bridge with players probably better than I, and possibly critical, suggested poker. That must have been a delightful moment to them, but I am sure they exchanged never a smile. I had played poker

years before that with other quiet people at low points for a little fun, and not having played for a long time, and being in a cheerful, perhaps reasonably exhilarated mood, the idea made a sudden appeal to me. Play poker with men you know nothing about! protested somebody afterwards with horror. Well, but I had never before dined with people with whom poker was unsafe, and why should it have crossed my mind that for the first time in my life I was consorting with sharpers? I played a fairly sound, cautious game, and it so happened that at this particular time—of all times—I had for once some money in the bank, and it would not be absolutely fatal if I *did* lose a few pounds. So . . . we played poker. I daresay the course of the game was hackneyed enough, but I am sure it was arranged with skill. The method, of course, was to arrange the pack so that I was given a good hand, a hand to bet on, a hand which would have won nine times out of ten, and one of my opponents a hand which would just beat it. This was not done every time, by any means. Frequently I won—small amounts. They grew a little less careful as the evening went on, perhaps, but they never verbally egged me on and repressed any sign of triumph; indeed, it is probable the affair was so much one of routine with them that little triumph was felt. They expressed sympathy with me, and more than once suggested that as the luck was so dead against me we should play bridge instead. Then I would win a trifle and take heart to go on. I protest it was all very skilful. Finally, I had four knaves against four queens, and that brought me to the end of my resources and I stopped. As we went away together, my original friend and I, he expressed a frank regret that I should have lost so much, and delicately hoped it was not a very inconvenient amount. In truth it was for me a tragical sum—that unlucky coincidence of money in the bank! else had I stopped earlier—but I thought the luck *must* turn. . . . Well, there the money was, and on the next day I wrote out cheques.

Was I really cheated? asks the pitying if censorious reader. Was it not possible it was only an extraordinary run of ill coincidences? Alas! there was no doubt. In a few days a more than suspicious friend had made inquiries and discovered that my amusing Irishman had a very bad

reputation indeed; I was persuaded to go to a solicitor and the solicitor consulted a detective, and the detective found out that the other two were persons well-known to the police. Of course, I did not make a fuss. The money was gone, and both to lose one's money and declare one's folly in public as well would have been a climax of mismanagement. That is how thieves prosper and the police are impotent. I should admire vastly the public spirit of one who came forward in such a case, but it seemed to me any public advantage would have been incommensurate with the annoyance to myself. My acquaintance will not be met again where I met him, and there's an end of it so far as I am concerned.

I proceed to a few reflections. Candidly, I find in myself no animus or grudge whatever against the other two. It was all in the way of their calling. To them I was as a person they had met in a railway train or on a steamer; they had no especial obligation to me; I was just a unit of the society on which they preyed. Their geniality was partly acting; but partly, I am sure, a genuine expression of temperament. They were rather like company promoters who had got my money by a lying prospectus, or patentees of a sham medicine who had got it by a lying advertisement. And their skill was rather greater, their nerve far greater, than that of such malefactors. Let me say all I can for them. They are an instrument to punish a kind of folly that is generally vicious. Even in my exceptional case, though there would have been little harm in the mild and honest game I had thought to enjoy; still, I had no business to be gambling, and their fools are nearly always useless creatures, and the money they steal would have been spent as they spend it. There is no prolonged hypocrisy or sneaking dissimulation in their lives; they meet with honest folk for brief periods only, and their real social moments are passed in the company of their fellows, mutually cognisant of their profession, though I daresay there is an etiquette of nescience. It is otherwise with the sharper who still keeps some sort of footing in decent society and uses it to decoy an unsuspecting fool among his professional friends, and with every wish to be magnanimous I confess I think of my original betrayer with pronounced dislike. Really, not a nice existence—to go

about among people who would not speak to one if they knew what one really was, to study a new acquaintance's humour and ingratiate oneself and make a show of frank jollity and all that—all to pick his pocket in the end! No, my dear man, you really are a worm, a very nasty sort of excrescence on our muddle of barbarism and civilisation, and it's a pity people's care for their boots prevents their squashing you. And you couldn't even play your own game through: you had to call in your more skilful experts. Go away! Even as regards the other two, I confess I should hear of their being laid by the heels with some complacency, though since the elder of them has been watched by the police for twenty years without that happening, I doubt I may never have that satisfaction. For, after all, it is not a happy use of skill and nerve, and the burglar—the really accomplished burglar—must have more of both. Farewell to all three for ever—for I don't think any of them will fit the cap and bring an action against me. The experience was not worth the money; still, an experience it was and has made me something of an article.

Mrs. Pearman's Eldest

By Maude Egerton King

I WAS coming home after an hour or so of pleasant rambling and flower-gathering. The country was deep in summer. Straight in my eyes the sun burned above the shoulder of our stately purple hill; the trees cast their long cool shadows upon the golden grass; the air was absolutely still and sweet with briar and blackberries, while the gnats were busy in mid-air, weaving fine weather for the morrow.

When I came to the gate of the rickyard of Holly Farm, I gathered up my burden of trailing honeysuckle in bloom and berry, tall scabious and golden bracken, and scrambled over as well as I could. Through the farm lay my nearest way homewards; and here as it happened a little scene awaited me which broke in sadly on my happiness and put me quite out of tune with the golden time.

A little girl of about five years of age, holding a jug and a tin can in her hands, was standing just out of range of the chained collie at the house door, looking at him with a face of blankest terror. She did not see me hurrying towards her. Twice she took a few steps forward and as rapidly flew away, for the creature leapt to the end of his chain and howled, nearly pulling his barrel after him in his unnecessary zeal. I called out to her that I was coming, but she did not hear, and mustering all the strength of her poor little heart, she hugged her can and jug close to her breast, made one mad rush and reached the door. The terror was by no means over, for the length of chain allowed "Bob" to sniff at her very legs, although she stood flat against the door and on tip-toe. By this time I came up to her and told her not to be afraid, for though the dog made a great noise he meant no mischief; and to prove it I went up to him, not without misgiving, and patted his head. I do not forget the face the child turned up to mine. It was

as bloodless as poor living, ill-health and fear could make it, and the eyes were almost idiotic with terror.

"There!" I said, "you are not frightened any more, are you, little girl? See what a friendly old dog he is."

She made no reply; looked at me and then at the dog. "What is your name, dear?" I asked as gently as I could.

The white lips moved, but no sound came.

"What have you come for?" I said, touching the can that she clutched in her hand.

She shrank away from me as far as the unyielding door allowed, then whispered hoarsely, "Quart o' skim."

"Have you never come for it before?" I asked, taking care to keep between her and the dog.

The terror was dying out of the eyes and a faint wonderment looked through at her curious questioner.

"Comes mostly every day," she said.

"And haven't you made friends with old Bob yet? Come here, take my hand and pat his head, then you won't feel afraid any more."

She set the jug and can down, put her hand in mine, and together we approached the animal.

"Now pat him," I said.

She was evidently accustomed to obey, for she did so, although I saw her little red hand tremble, and her whole body seemed one throb of terror. "That's a good girl," I said, stooping to look into her eyes. "Now you won't be afraid when you come to-morrow, will you?"

"No, ma'am," in a hoarse whisper; and then I saw two huge tears roll over her cheeks and fall on her meagre frock. At that moment the door opened.

"I say you, Lizzie Pearman!" cried Mrs. Loveday, the farmer's wife—"Oh, good day, ma'am, what a nice afternoon—you'll have to call earlier for your skim or you'll not get it; it's took for the young pigs as soon as ever it's separated, but still I've saved some for you just this once."

The girl held up jug and can, and in a moment turned to go. I ran after her and gave her a little coin, suggesting a possible outlay in "goodies."

She looked at it, uncertain, half in terror.

"Take it, dear; haven't you a pocket?"

She put down her burdens and took the thing in her hand, dropping the abrupt curtsey of our country-side.

"Haven't you a pocket?" I said again, as she still appeared puzzled and made no attempt to get rid of it.

She shook her head.

"Oh, well, never mind; we'll tie it safe in here, and then you can take it out when you get home." I tied it in a corner of the very dirty lilac pinafore. She watched the proceeding without any show of pleasure, and when all was ready took up her milk, dropped me another curtsey, and went her way.

Mrs. Loveday was watching us, hands on fat hips, an amused smile on her face. I went back to her.

"Who is that poor child?"

"She's Mrs. Pearman's girl—her eldest," she said with a rather significant emphasis.

"What a crushed, silent little thing it is! She makes me feel miserable."

"That sort mostly are," she said drily, watching me.

"What sort do you mean?"

"Oh, what they calls love-children in these parts," she answered casually, "them that comes before marriage—and in this case it was another man, not Mr. Pearman at all, so that makes it worse. I can tell you," she continued, seeing I was really interested, "that child's life's no holiday. She works from morning to night—no thanks and many blows."

"Work! But how old is she? She is too small to do much work surely, a mere baby."

"She's eight year old," said Mrs. Loveday, shaking her head, "if she's a day; and yet she look no more than five, do she? She's only sent up here because they knew she's so fearful of Bob. There ain't no need; there's Jack Walter from next door, he come every day, and he used to fetch their milk until they found as how she was so fearful like; then they took to sending her regular. I do believe that poor child's heart's been fair burst with terror this many times, and all because of old Bob." She added this in a tone of amused pity, outcome of that mingle of kind heart and insensitiveness I had sometimes found before in our country folk. She would tramp miles in bad weather to nurse a sick baby for love, and cry bitterly if it died, too; but she and all her children would sit up at the window wrapped in their blankets on

a cold winter morning rather than miss the sport of pig-killing.

I suggested that perhaps Bob's barrel might be shifted a-yard further from the door. "Maybe, maybe not," she said; "my man do hate trampers so, you see; and so he kind of encourages Bob. As I was telling you, that poor child's the black sheep always in that family, and her brothers and sisters are learned to treat her as if she was the dirt under their feet. There's three of Pearman's own, Clara, Julia, and Fred, that's how they call them, and I've seen again and again on a Saturday, those two girls with hair in curl papers, and even Fred, that's only a baby, with a large curl rolled up down the middle of his head, and yet *that* poor child, eldest though she is, going about with her hair as straight as a rat tail and no sign o' Sunday about her. And Mrs. Walter told me only the other day that Lizzie was the only girl at the treat that hadn't a starched white pinny of some kind. I call it crool, I do."

"Whatever kind of woman is the mother?"

"Oh, she's nice enough spoken, but you can't go by that in these parts. I think it's kiss cheek and bite back with her. Two faces under one hat, my man calls it."

"But do they actually ill-treat her?"

"Ill-treat! Why, I've seen that child with bruises on her arm just the colour o' blackberry juice, and as big as the palm o' your hand! I *could* tell you tales if I liked!"

My heart sickened. "I will go and see them," I said. "Good day, Mrs. Loveday. How I envy you your dahlias!"

There was evidently a greater terror in the child's life than Bob, for all his ferocity, and I was determined to find it out and help the chidden bruised little soul so far as pity might.

The next day I went to Pearman's cottage. A dull loutish fellow, with face and hair all much of a colour with his pale corduroys, was digging in the garden as I went in. He touched his cap, and we talked about the weather. A head appeared round the door of the cottage, then the door was hastily closed. I felt instinctively that someone was donning a clean apron and straightening anti-macassars, and I stayed my going a little to praise a big blue

pansy. Then the door opened wide and Mrs. Pearman came out. She was a clean-looking little woman with bright brown eyes, clear colouring on a thin face, an apologetic smile, and a gentle but fluent address.

"Good day, miss," she said, making way for me. "Will you come in?"

I thanked her and entered, and she went on at once: "You'll excuse me if I said miss; you *do* look so young, if it's no offence to you to say so."

I assured her there was no offence, and hurried into inquiries about her children.

"I expect they'll be here in a minute," she said; "they're always so pleased to see visitors. You'll excuse their being untidy and shabby; little ones *will* play, you know, and pore people like us can't always have everything spick and span, can they?"

As she spoke the door opened and a little troop entered, all so brushed, polished, and clean-pinafored, that the woman's excuse seemed curiously unnecessary. They were healthy, nice-looking little things enough, and I took the youngest girl on my lap, and admired the boy's frock, which was really daintily made.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Pearman, rolling his one fat curl round her forefinger, "I always try to keep them as nice as I can; though, of course, the best I can do is nothing to what gentlefolks calls nice! I don't let them mix much with their neighbours, of course, ma'am."

"Why not?" I asked rather brusquely. "There are some nice good people about, I should have thought."

She looked at me with her hard, pretty eyes, and then said very softly, "I shouldn't wish ever to speak evil of *any*one, but I speak as I find—I speak as I find."

"I expect your eldest girl is a great help to you in keeping the little ones nice?"

"Oh, Lizzie? Well, I've taught her a lot of handy little things and taken a deal of trouble with her, but——"

"I should think," I said, looking straight at her, "that Lizzie is a good hard-working child; but I fear she is very delicate."

The woman looked at me sharply. "Oh, yes," she said with an intense smile, "Lizzie's a very good girl on the

whole, and I tell her if she only tries hard she'll pick up lots of little hints and fit herself for work in a gentleman's house by and by. I have worked all my life in gentlemen's houses," she went on. Her speech grew softer and more rapid, and she stood smiling and staring out of the little window far into that genteel past of hers.

"I was kitchenmaid first in a titled house, with seven others kept, the Honourable Wynne, I dare say you know the name—then I was a housemaid there for two years—and then I went to a very high family—his cousins, and there the young ladies took such a liking to me that they had me learned dressmaking, and I was lady's maid. It was a very high family," she repeated, looking at me askance, "four footmen and a butler, and a French *chef*, besides all of us, and one of my young ladies married a lord. Of course, it's a very different life I've come to now," she added apologetically, "but as I always say, society isn't everything, and pore people mustn't be choosers."

The woman's soft, silly chatter embarrassed me, and left me with only the tamest platitudes to utter in her breathing intervals.

"Well," I said, pulling myself together, "after all, no woman can fill a higher position than that of a good wife and mother."

She looked at me, and said quickly, "That's what *I* always say."

The parlour was exquisitely neat and clean, but on the mantel-shelf a couple of "art vases" with peacock feathers, and photograph frames, had usurped the place of the honest spotted dogs beloved by most of my cottage neighbours. I missed the customary rush-seated chairs, resenting these shoddy intruders with cotton-velvet seats, every one with a bow of silk or an antimacassar to its foolish back, adding ugliness to a sufficiency of discomfort. The home, for all its vulgarity, and the little children too, were undoubtedly well kept; but the unseen presence of little Lizzie, unkempt, unhappy, was between me and the meek-voiced, glib mother and her industry, and I disliked her with all my heart.

Then I came to the reason of my visit. I told her I had seen the little girl going to the farm for milk, and knew

she had a long way to come for it. As I too sent daily for milk, could I not fetch theirs and let Lizzie come for it to my house, which was half-way between the farm and the cottage?

"Well, now that *is* kind, miss—ma'am, I *do* beg your pardon," said Mrs. Pearman, but her eyes had a very ugly glitter of anger in them which made me fear I had done more harm than good. She went to the door of the stairs and called, "Lizzie, Lizzie, come here."

The child came down, and her dull, lifeless face lighted up a little when she saw me.

"The kind lady has said you can fetch the milk from her house instead of going all the long way to the farm. What do say to her for that, my dear?" and she patted her shoulder in would-be playfulness.

The child's thanks were quenched on her lips by her mother's touch; she turned and stared with such honest surprise that I almost laughed, the woman flushed angrily, and the caress ended in a small sharp shake.

"Thank the lady, there's a good girl."

"Thank you, ma'am," whispered the child, with the first flicker of a smile I had seen on her face: she was thinking of Bob, I knew.

"She *do* feel the distance rather far sometimes, I think. She often gets tired and low; but then I tell her it's the will that does it; it's that that brought *me* through. Now *I'm* one that'll go on till I drop. I never know when I've done enough. And just before Freddie came, the doctor said to me—we're on the dispensary, ma'am; of course, it's not for us to have doctors anyhow else—and he said, 'Mrs. Pearman, you never know when you've done enough, and if you want to come through all right, you must take things a bit easier now.' And I couldn't help smiling, if you'll forgive my mentioning it, ma'am, and I said, 'I've reared three and buried two, and I ought to know what I can and what I can't do, oughtn't I?' Though I sometimes think," she went on, turning up Freddie's face with her hand, "that I shan't rear him, the croup takes him so badly at times; but I always say——"

But I could endure no more of what Mrs. Pearman always said, so with a glance at the clock, and an exclamation, I remembered an engagement at home, and took my

leave, telling Lizzie I would look out for her on the morrow.

As I went up the garden path I heard a sudden scream, and saw Mrs. Pearman run to the rescue of little Freddie, who had fallen flat on his fat nose; she caught him to her breast, kissing and soothing him with a world of tenderness in face and tone. For the children born in wedlock this woman had a heart full of love and devotion, and a self-denying if vulgar pride in their goodly show; for only by dint of very, very hard work, I was sure, was she able to clothe and feed them so well, keep so comfortable a home on her husband's earnings and her own little savings For the other child, the offspring presumably of something nearer akin to romantic passion than the feeling she could have had for the dull fellow of fifty she had married in her early thirties, she felt apparently nothing but a bitter resentment akin to loathing.

I went home, sore at heart for the love-child.

I saw Lizzie as often as I could when she came daily for her quart of skim, and many a time she took tea with me, and we had long talks together. The pent heart and stunted mind opened out little by little, and turned to me like a flower to sunshine.

Lizzie's conversation was of a very limited order; it came at first in little disconnected spurts amid a desert of silence. "Freddie, he *do* like taties and milk, he do." Silence. "Mother says Julie grow bigger than Clara, but Ju, she ain't the eldest." Silence. "Mother's goin' to give Freddie a wheel-barrer when he can blow his nose hisself." Before long, however, the desert began to be threaded by quite little running streams of talk, and then it was that I learned more about her. She seemed to bear no grudge against the little ones who had so utterly filled her mother's scanty heart; indeed, she took great pride in them, and asked if she might bring little Julie up one day that I might hear how well she recited "I wish I was a primrose," and her affection for Freddie seemed only a little less than that of his mother. I met her at all hours lugging him about, wheeling him in a perambulator, or coaxing him along the hot road. I assured her often that he was big enough to walk, but she only smiled and took him up again. I think she prayed that he might

remain eternally Baby for her, that she might continue to lavish all the love and devotion of her soul upon him; perhaps she knew, child though she was, that the coming years would make him only very big and brutal and ungrateful.

I was anxious to hear from her own lips the truth about the treatment she received at the hands of her mother, and yet I did not want to make her tell tales. The news came unsought. "Julie stole some apples last night, an' mother slapped her hand, an' she did 'oller so, and only just for a slap, too, so mother had to give her a lump of sugar. I used to 'oller out when mother hit me, but she only go on hittin' me the more I 'oller, and sometimes with the broom or anything handy."

"Does father ever beat you?"

"Only now and again; once when he come home drunk from the fair he kicked me, but then he kicked Julie too; and he *was* sorry Mother gave it him like anythink."

"What does he say when mother beats you?"

"He don't mostly take no notice. The other day I heard him say, 'Draw it mild, old girl,' but he mostly goes out when she's cross with me."

Then we went abroad for a little; but I gave strict orders that Lizzie was to come as usual and to have tea twice a week with our maids in the kitchen. The child, for all her lifeless, undemonstrative manner, showed me in several ways that she was sorry I was going, and arrived breathless just as the dog-cart left for the station, with a big bunch of wild flowers drooping in one hot hand and a basket of bilberries in the other. "They're for you," she panted, thrusting them up at me. "I got 'em myself."

Very few letters reached me on our wandering holiday in the Black Forest, and those made no mention of the serious outbreak of illness in the village. But within an hour of our return my cook overwhelmed me with the news, adding that Lizzie had stopped coming and she thought she might be poorly: the last time she had been "you could see the tears dropping on her bread and jam—she said it hurt her so dreadful to swallow."

I felt the sharp fear at my heart, but it was too late to go to the Pearmans that night. Early next morning I

set out for their cottage. It was a glorious morning. My way lay across our high uplifted common, where the heather was caught in a thousand diamond gossamer nets. Below me and away to the south stretched the Weald, and the still, radiant air gave to both eye and ear all the nearer treasures in its depths: trees, homesteads almost submerged in the round-headed trees, and all that betokened homesteads,—thin blue smoke, sounds of cattle, clink of forge, clear space of field with its dark hedge-line drawn all round it, a tiny man and beast at work in it. Then came the middle distance, with a little spire, then more massing of trees, until all things lost their definition as they neared and were at last lost in the merest silver suggestion of the further Downs. Near at hand in the cottage garden the sunflowers stood rankly overgrown, and the adventurous hollyhock blooms had climbed to the very top of their ladders and were looking in at the bedroom windows. The apples pattered down from the boughs, and the wasps were busy and boisterous among the fallen plums.

As I entered the shadow of the lane in which the Pearmans lived, a little group approached me, the sight of which laid a sudden hand on my heart: a man and a little child, a low trolley cart drawn by a pony. I hardly recognised Pearman at first, with his uncouth limbs thrust into his best black suit. His head was uncovered, and in his left hand he carried a black hat. I knew at once what lay on the cart—it was a very little coffin. When they came near I saw that it was covered with a black shawl, and that a bunch of white asters lay in the centre. I was too late.

Pearman touched his forehead sheepishly. "Good-morning," he said.

"Lizzie—is she dead?" I managed to ask.

We had just met where the beeches were thinner, and the cruel, radiant day shone on the rusty black shawl and the asters already fading. Pearman led the little pony a few paces forward into the shadow.

"Last Friday she died, ma'am; and I am just going to bury her."

His face was so stolid and inexpressive, I could not tell if any feeling lay behind the words or not.

"Is anyone else coming?" I hardly know why I asked.

"No, ma'am," he said, a little ashamed as I like to think. "The missis has knocked up a bit herself you see, and the children's at school, and so there's no one but me and Freddie. He do fret after her so, I thought as how I'd bring him along."

All my heart rushed out to Freddie. I stooped and kissed the round, rosy face.

"Let me come too," I said. "Poor little Lizzie!"

Through the divine morning we moved slowly and reverently, the bareheaded man and I, the tired child with the huge crape bow fastened to his pinafore, and the workaday pony, wondering perhaps that they let him go so gently for once, seeing how light a burden he drew along.

The sun was full upon us, and I carried Freddie for over half the distance, remembering how often Lizzie's little arms had borne him. By the time we reached the lych-gate of the churchyard, the man's face was purple, and the sweat was dripping from his forehead, but he made no attempt to cover his head. The little thing in the coffin was sacred for the first time since it came into being and he was paying respect to it after his own poor fashion.

The junior curate, awaiting us at the grave, received us awkwardly. He set about his business at once, reading the service in a loud, clerical, unmeaning voice and with the greatest possible dispatch, and it seemed to me he cared or knew nothing about the child he was burying. I could not follow the service. I was thinking all the while of the dependent life that had come into the world, so few years ago, holding out helpless hands for love and protection—only to find itself unwanted, forbidden, neglected: the little plant which, because it had sprung up outside the trim-hedged garden of respectability, had never been anything but a weed in the eyes that should have found it loveliest.

My heart beat angrily, bitterly: when at last I looked up the curate was closing the book and I saw his smooth, silly face through blinding tears.

A few hours afterwards I passed through the village and saw the pony, his nose deep in his bag, outside the

"Plough," and there on the little trolley cart lay Freddie fast asleep with the black shawl rolled into a pillow for his head.

So that was the last of the love-child; except indeed for a transaction which took place between the mother and the insurance man a little while after.

I was told by a cottage neighbour of mine who goes to church that it really was quite wonderful to see how well that poor Mrs. Pearman manages; for not one of the little ones appeared in church next Sunday without "a bit of black, and Mrs. Pearman had on a bonnet of solid crape, and a deep flounce of the same all round her skirt."

Poor, unloved love-child! There's nothing more I can do for her now, save plant the grave with her favourite red and white daisies, and try to keep alive some memory of the devoted little sister in Freddie's mind.

The Oberland-Simplon Express

By Filson Young

EVERY evening when the twilight falls we meet on the bridge: a crooked old woman, three little children, and I. The old woman works in the fields, the children in the school by the church, and I in the village; our little world is less than the half of a mile long; but at dusk, when our work is over, we can look at the trains that come flying past out of the forest, and let our thoughts follow them on the long shining road that leads to Italy and the blue sea.

All day the sun has burned us; but here in the evening it is cool, and we lean idly against the parapet breathing the sweet air that steals from the forest. We can see the signals and their great eyes of ruby that glare at us in the dark, making blood-red pools of light on the ground; we can see the signalman reading in his house of glass, and hear the chime of the bells that bring messages to him. From far down the road comes a charcoal-burner home from the forest; he is singing as he walks, and his footfalls grow louder as he passes beneath us, bent down under the weight of his basket. Then the signals clash, and the wires tingle, and the red eyes turn to yellow, staring anxiously into the forest. The footsteps and the song die away down the road; below us in the darkening valley the lights come out; above us, in the amber sky, the stars.

As we hold our breath in the stillness there comes a murmur like the voice of the sea in a shell. It is hushed and then heard again; lost as the breeze stirs the forest trees, and then heard nearer and deeper in the darkness, now like the sound of the seashore itself, now, nearer still, with a beating rhythm like the galloping of a thousand horses. Two burning eyes leap on us out of the forest; with a shriek and roar and a hurricane of wind the train hurls itself beneath us, all the sky reverberating to the

white heat of the furnace and all the world gloriously shaking with light and fire and thunder. But only for a moment; when we turn from gazing after it, the fire and the thunder are gone; the signals have ruby eyes again, the signalman sits reading in his house of glass.

In the silence the yellow moon sails out from behind the forest trees, and follows us as we walk homeward up the hill to sleep. Before we wake the fire and the thunder will have buried themselves deep beneath the mountain snows, and, before we sleep again, have come to rest beside the lagoons of Venice.

A First Encounter

By R. A. Scott-James

He was a tall, active, eager man, and his face bore a ludicrous resemblance to that of Mr. W. B. Yeats. He was a citizen of Detroit, and Detroit seemed to have absorbed his personality and taken him to itself.

"Have you an Aquarium in London?" he asked, and scarcely waited till I asked if his own city was thus privileged.

"Oh my, yes; with real live salt-water fish. You've never been to Detroit? I reckon you've missed the finest city in America. There are very fine streets in Detroit; fine parks, avenues, rivers, canals, hotels, theatres, public buildings. . . ."

The catalogue ran on rapidly and inexhaustibly. "Have you got zoological gardens in London? Quite a number of fine beasts in Detroit—bears: grizzly bears, polar bears, black bears, brown bears; and wolves, jackals, hyenas, jaguars, spotted zebras. And what about chemical works in London? In Detroit? Oh, sure! The largest chemical works in the world. I've quite a number of fine views which I'd like you to see."

I was allowed to gaze upon the spacious splendours of this city as represented in forty or fifty coloured post-cards, carefully addressed to my patriotic friend, and inscribed "Lovingly, Monica."

I regret that I have never been to Detroit, and never seen this genial, eloquent, whole-hearted citizen in his proper Detroitian setting. And I have never been to Chicago, nor to San Francisco, nor Ohio, nor St. Louis, nor any of those Far-Western cities every one of which is unique. In fact, I have been to America, and missed seeing most of it. I never saw the Rocky Mountains, nor the Colorado Desert, nor the flood of the Mississippi, in which

respect, it is true, I resemble most of the inhabitants of Eastern America. The territory, after all, is varied as well as large. The surface of it has been scratched in many places and in many ways, and the casual visitor must rely on what has been thrown conspicuously into view. One might almost as well describe one's impressions of the world as one's impressions of America.

We do not, of course, recollect our first impressions of the world; but if we imagine a well-educated gentleman from Mars, versed in the literature of our planet, arriving here on a journey of business or pleasure, we may be sure that his first impressions would be vivid. He would think it well, perhaps, to postpone any pronouncement for a few days or weeks. Having descended upon Central Africa, he might hesitate to conclude that the civilisation of this region was characteristic of our planet; he might withhold judgment until he had seen Pekin and Detroit, or even New York and London. But in any case his impressions would be interesting. He would do for the world what Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Hueffer *et hoc genus omne* have done for America—he would arrive naïvely and famously among us; he would write a book entitled *You Worldlings*, which would be eagerly read; he would win the credit of drawing from us a sort of planetary consciousness, a proud belief that we were all citizens of the world, of exciting our orbic *amour propre* till we were disposed to defend our fellow-worldsmen in the South Seas should he criticise their habit of tattooing. It might almost seem that Cairo was beginning to tolerate London, and London ceasing to be jealous of Chicago, on the day when this outspoken Martian challenged us all to community of feeling.

My own arrival in New York was unheralded. Indeed, I had been preceded by other Englishmen whose strange appearance in that city had occasioned as much excitement as the citizens could spare. But this did not check in me an uncanny feeling as if I had suddenly alighted upon the world. It was an actual fact that I had been living for years on a foggy island somewhere in the region of the Gulf Stream, an island full of old ruins and picturesque historical objects, still inhabited, but removed by nearly three thousand miles from the Continent—I mean the

Continent of America. I was face to face with two-legged Americans who politely and at once asked me: "What do you think of us?" "How do you like us?" "Is this at all what you expected?" It was not. I distinctly remember the first emotions of bewilderment and desolation, and the real relief I experienced on glancing at my legs and appreciating the fact that I also had two of them—that at least in this respect I resembled them. I record it as an unimportant but psychological fact that I was overjoyed at possessing the same number of legs as the average American.

It is a great thing to start from some point of community. I was glad that I could do so, for from the first I found myself out in all my reckonings, a stranger in a land extraordinarily foreign. Like everybody else in England, I had thought that I knew all about America without going there. I had taken my lesson from the American tourist, I had met other people's American relatives, I knew something of American literature, and I was not unacquainted with the worst as well as the best that America can do in fiction. I had my preconception of the American; I considered that perhaps I was equipped to understand him, though quite unfit to cope with him. All Englishmen think that there is only one type of him; and it is perfectly true that there is something in the English omnibus, in the English picture-gallery, in Stratford in the season and London out of the season, which calls forth certain easily recognisable qualities from the trans-Atlantic tourist—hilarity, self-confidence, a possessive air, the Americanism of the American in England, comparable to the proverbial Britishism of the Briton in Paris.

But that is only a single effect—the effect produced upon the New World when it is out on a voyage of discovery, returning upon the track of Columbus—treating us Britishers as our joint ancestors treated the Red Indian. I soon found, as I said, that I was out in my calculations. Even my first distant glimpse of New York City was different from what I had expected. I knew that there were sky-scrapers, but I had never been told that sky-scrapers were like this. When somebody said, "Here is New York," I saw what appeared to be a dim mist in the sky resolving itself into a sort of mirage floating over the

river and the land; and that again resolved itself into an incredible prodigy of brick and iron and stone, a huddle of towered buildings standing together like a monstrous, impossible citadel, a creature to dream of as we dream of tidal waves and cataclysms. But it was real, almost insolently real, putting its mountainous, unassailable side foremost towards the river-mouth and the sea, its Singer Tower, its Ten-Cent-Storeman's Tower, and all its other nameable giants rising, as it appeared, straight from the river, advertising at the first glance the sheer monstrosity of America, of the American metropolis, of American wealth. The romantic distant haze, suggestive and wonderful, had become this hard, concrete, powerful thing, astonishing, impressive, audacious.

At first I was assailed by the feeling: "This is advertisement; this is the New York way of saying, 'You have done everything else in the architectural line in Europe and Asia; you have invented Roman and Gothic styles; you have used every combination of square and round and pointed; you have created more beautiful things than the world needs; but you never, never thought or dreamed of anything like this; this is our unique 'American'; we invented it; it will be the first thing you see as you sail upon us from the Atlantic.'"

That was how it first impressed me. And for the moment it was no use reasoning with myself and saying that they had to build upwards because they lived on a long, narrow island, and had no way of expanding excepting towards the sky. There it was, impressive, prodigious, marvellous; everything that can stir the sense of wonder without creating the impression of beauty. And I was for the moment rash enough and unreasonable enough to stigmatise it as successful advertisement, advertisement so successful as to seize even the imagination; and I did not give sufficient weight to the undesignedness of the whole mass, the unconscious symbolism of this heterogeneous collection of business buildings, presenting, by the chance of collocation, the appearance of a whole.

For all cities worthy of the name, cities that are more than mere agglomerations of people, have contrived somehow, by accident or design, to put forward some monument symbolic of their character and culture, of that which wins

respect and veneration there. Athens achieved this end designedly in the Acropolis, where her citadel of defence contained also the symbols of her religion and art. In the older cities of England the most conspicuous objects were the castles and the churches. The Tower of London, St. Paul's, and Westminster Abbey dominated the first view of mediæval London from the river, and modern London thrust forward its Houses of Parliament and its official buildings, symbols of its politics and its bureaucracy. Paris has thrust forward the Louvre to vie with Notre Dame in its dominance of the Seine. And it is by the same unconscious impulse, I suppose, that New York, having none of the religiosity of Philadelphia or Boston, having no respect for politics, like London, and no excessive respect for art, like Paris, has made prominent, not its cathedral, or its political buildings, or its art galleries, but its business houses and its colossal advertisements.

But just as I am on the verge of pronouncing that the citizens of New York are absorbed in business, a dulcet message from the West, beautifully typed on beautiful paper, comes to me, knocking the wind out of my sails. "I suppose you are back on your native heath and hard at work composing delightfully critical comments on our country." After that, I shrink from verdicts, and especially from so banal a pronouncement as that the men of New York are absorbed in business. I do not know whether they are or not. But I do observe that the *idea* of business—business as a phantasmal and recurrent item in conversation—is dangled before the eyes and ears of the unwary visitor. But thanks to my American correspondent and his timely distrust of my impressions, I am led to look back at the bias which directs our English view of the American "business" atmosphere; to remember that England, which is as much a nation of shopkeepers as ever it was, has never ceased to be slightly ashamed of the fact. It is part of our English tradition to maintain a large leisured class which, though deprived of the honourable duties of government and patronage, and now largely plebeian in its origin, has not ceased to be decorative, and is still the zenith of social ambition. This social ambition penetrates English life. None but the class of manual labourers has escaped it. Each class emulates the class socially above it. Each

circle seeks to protect its social prestige by a jealous exclusiveness, and each aspires to an ideal of dignified leisure. The new democratic spirit is only beginning to break down these ring fences so austerely preserved amid the debris of the Victorian era. No wonder English visitors are impressed by the "business" pride of New York, coming as they do from a country where a man's ambition is to do nothing to a country where a man's ambition is to have too much to do.

Here, I believe, we strike a real difference, a difference in illusions. I do not suppose that the average American gets through more work than the average Englishman, though most of my American critics will tell me that he does. The difference is that an American seems to respect primarily the business by which he makes his money, whereas the Englishman seems to respect the hobby by which he loses it. Both of them, of course, are alike in wanting to have as much money as they can possibly get; but whilst the American respects the process of getting it, the Englishman has been taught to be ashamed of it. The tiresome vainglory of the one contrasts with the conventional hypocrisy of the other. The American should make allowances for the Englishman who may be betrayed into irritation at this interest in business before the latter has learnt that it amounts almost to an artistic instinct. For you cannot be long in New York without observing that business has been actually embellished with that loving care which is akin to the care of the artist. I have been taken through offices organised to a point of efficiency which must be highly unremunerative. I am assured that millions of dollars are spent upon labour-saving appliances, which clearly satisfy the business instincts of directors on their artistic side—by which I imply their disinterested love of efficiency for its own sake. I venture to utter a conviction —*pace* my above-mentioned correspondent—when I say that this love of the machine is bred in the bone of the average American. College life, so far from destroying it as it generally does in England, fosters it in America. A group of young men from Harvard and Yale who for ten days were my fellow-voyagers on a small ship revealed, each and all of them, an almost passionate interest in the details of machinery, which in later life, I suppose, will reappear

in the organisation of their offices, as a punctilious feeling for instruments of efficiency.

If I am right in supposing that for most Americans business is not merely a profession, but a source of interest almost artistic in the sense that it is a pursuit adopted as much for its own sake as for its rewards, then it becomes easy to understand their seeming indifference to general ideas, their apparently limited imagination, their air of being unexposed to emotion. For a century and a half they have been developing their country's natural resources —which at first they were apt to regard as inexhaustible. Industry and commerce have become the obvious national affair; it was inevitable that they should begin by putting their genius into business and all that pertains to business. I have listened to the general talk in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, and more than once to groups of farmers in country places, and again and again I found that just as the conversation in England is apt to come round to national and local politics, so in America men come to speak of the great millionaires or the local business celebrities. A barber in Boston who was holding forth to a group of commercial travellers was explaining that a certain person was a very close friend of a certain other person. "But he would not let friendship interfere with business. And," he added, with an air of finality, "one can't." The sentiment was approved. It was obviously a point of honour to keep business sacred from the violations of personal feeling. A clever lady whose culture was as much European as American, told me that, according to her experience, men found it hard to get away from business; that they clung to it even when they were past the age of work; that in consequence they had few resources in themselves, and were at a loss as to how to spend their leisure. But she added that the younger generation was keen on golf, baseball, and other games, and that this athletic interest was sure to make a difference.

And here we have the admitted reason why politics in the States is so much a question of finance. For all excepting the classes engaged in manual labour, amongst whom there is growing up a broad and generous conception of the State, political rights seem to be little valued excepting in so far as they confer economic opportunity. Roosevelt is

careful to appeal to individual ambition as well as public sentiment when he says "our demand is that big business give the people a square deal, and that the people give a square deal to any man engaged in big business who honestly endeavors to do what is right and proper." Everyone, of course, must do what is right and proper, but rectitude and propriety must not destroy the chance, which everyone possesses, of becoming a Rockefeller; the "strenuous life" and the "square deal" presuppose that Rockefeller is the public ideal; and good politics must keep in view a nation composed exclusively of Rockefellers. In spite of his appeal to public sentiment and the common good, I am told that the Socialists, at any rate, will not be pleased with Roosevelt so long as he retains the popular motto of the "square deal"—which means a fair distribution of the licence to cut throats.

The admiration which Theodore Roosevelt draws from perhaps the large majority of the people seems to lend colour to the prevalent English idea of the "gullibility" of the American. That is an English mistake. I admit that I cannot myself understand why Mr. Roosevelt should be described as "magnetic." I have from my own observation seen that he is untiring; that he has an unending fund of vivacity; that by his extraordinary physical vitality he is able to maintain from morning to night an exuberance of spirits, a capacity for continued enthusiasm in rhetoric and invective, a rollicking air of schoolboyish fun and vehemence; that he can provide a roaring theatrical entertainment which would delight any proletarian crowd in the world. But this is not what we generally mean by "magnetism"; for his art of impressing lacks the subtlety and depth which we should associate with the word; it seems to spring from no hidden force of intellectual and moral power; he is not, in fact, "impressive" as was his far more subtle prototype, Abraham Lincoln. But I have talked with many Americans who, though not in the least carried away by his "magnetism," are none the less ready to lend him their support; who admit his crudity, but think it useful that crude facts should be crudely stated; who are aware of his vanity and egotism, but believe that those very qualities ensure his honesty; who welcome his restlessness, his unconventionality, his headstrong impulsiveness, be-

cause these are the very qualities which are generally lacking in political, legal, and official circles, where only by something the very opposite of red tape is it possible to get things done.

And many even of those who do not agree with him admire his generosity, his quick sympathy, his kindly, impressionable disposition, and the very swiftness of his unpremeditated acts. Here is a nature which, with all its appearance of strength, may be easily swayed; but it will be swayed by what is personal, human, and for the most part generous.

And if I may seem to be writing in too free a manner about the people of America, criticising, as it were, the very hospitality which they extended to me, ungrateful, as it might appear, for the innumerable kindnesses which I received, I would beg my personal friends at least to remember that I have tried to detach myself, as I did when I conversed with them, from those individual relationships which are very real, which ought to be a modifying factor in any general judgment, but cannot be the main basis of one's impressions of a country. Moreover, in arriving hesitatingly at certain preliminary conclusions, I know how much I am indebted to the frankness of certain Americans who spoke to me in criticism of their country.

So far as "gullibility" is concerned, it is certainly the American who often scores off the Englishman. There are people in England who think that America exists for the sole purpose of fêteing celebrated authors and providing them with royalties. (For the benefit of American readers I may say that these people are only found in London literary circles.) Some time ago I asked an English author well-known in the States for what purpose he was about to visit America, and a lady novelist snubbed me with the remark: "Why, to be lionised, of course." Poor Mr. X.! He was received with all that hospitality for which Americans are famous; they gave him dinners and lunches; his publisher took him about like a menagerie, and collected genial "high-brow" audiences to be entertained by him—and instead of talking he sat horribly silent. It is recorded against him to this day that he would not talk!

English authors who propose to be fêted in America

should take a lesson from Mr. Roosevelt. They must learn to talk, and they may talk about anything in the world so long as they do it in a genial, vivacious, and preferably boisterous manner. But above all, let them beware of affectation, or any trick of personality which may pass for affectation. Mr. W. B. Yeats, for example, would have done well to have committed the sin of silence rather than to have betrayed to the mercies of the American humorist those poetical gestures, that beautiful earnestness, that grand manner, which make him an object of adoration only on this side of the Atlantic.

This intolerance of affectation, which may often blind people to real merit, is surely in itself a particularly healthy thing. One cannot fail to be struck by those very genuine democratic qualities in Americans which make them ridicule any attempt to gain personal distinction by adventitious aids. Wealth is the only adventitious aid which must be excepted, for wealth, in this practical business community, is a badge of merit, the insignia of power; and to be ostentatious about money is to understand the first business principle of conspicuous advertisement. If you are rich enough to own a sky-scraper, you can reside in a hovel and live as simply as Mr. Rockefeller; if you are not, then, I am told, you cannot afford to stay at any but the most expensive hotel. But this sort of display, this chimera of prosperity, belongs to that artistry of business which I have already mentioned. The appearance of wealth is, at any rate, the appearance of a good thing. The appearance of gentility, without the solid hall-mark of wealth, is for the American the most detestable of frauds; and no man who is not rich would dare to say that his ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*. I do not mean that the American positively objects to what we should call "good breeding"; but wherever breeding tends to pass into mannerism or "side" it arouses his hostility. They have never had a feudal system in the States, and they have therefore no effete survival of feudalism. There is no such thing among them as an hereditary right to be insolent. Patronage or a patronising manner towards the "lower classes" is not tolerated, for there are no upper and lower classes; there are only rich and poor, and the poor man of to-day is the rich man of to-morrow; and a rich man is far too proud of

his fortune-making talents to be ashamed of the fact that once he was poor. No American would be idiotic enough to say, as I have heard an English lady say, "What I complain of in the poor is their ingratitude." The characteristic American view was put to me by a rich lady, who said: "One thing I must complain of in you English: the low wages you pay to agricultural labourers." There are plenty of English people who still think that it is the virtue of the poor to be content that they were ordained by God to be poor; but every American thinks that it is the virtue of the poor to grow rich.

For here, in these vast States of America, there was a country waiting to be occupied and exploited. The wealth was potentially there; it needed nothing but labour and energy to realise it; the economic conditions fostered a spirit of equality which would not recognise any difference but difference in energy, will-power, and strength. The poor man has never suffered from the social handicap which holds him back in the old world. His labour was needed. There was little to distinguish him from those for whom he worked. In time he, too, might join the employing class and climb up on the shoulders of others. Immigrants arriving from Ireland, Italy, Poland, and all the underfed or over-crowded countries of the world, may at first offer their bodies and their muscles to the sweater. But they, too, are soon caught by the spirit of America, and are drawn into it. The vivifying air, the atmosphere of emulation, the infection of competitive energy stimulate them also, and turn them into real Americans, as tough, as callous, as capable as all the rest. By thousands and tens of thousands they pour in—these raw, inexperienced recruits—and America drills and hammers them till all the callowness, the softness, and the useless gentleness is knocked out of them, and their very jowls grow heavier, their eyes harder, their emotions less troublesome.

I have been through slums in Boston and Philadelphia, and I have spent hours in that noisome, hidden region of New York which surpasses in horror even the worst that London can show. But they are mostly inhabited by these poor foreigners who have come out here to make their fortunes; who seldom disfigure by their presence the streets in which they do not live or work. Outside these grim

regions one is impressed by the apparent prosperity and brightness of the people. It seemed to me that the average working man was, on the whole, better off than a man of the corresponding class in England. In New York, it is true, I found it a rare thing to see men's faces that did not wear hard-set expressions; their eyes seemed fixed on a near and narrow point. Those expressionless, cold-blooded faces were so abundant in the streets, and even the clubs, that I shall always think of New York as the chilliest place I ever stayed in—and this notwithstanding the boisterous, hospitable, "hail-fellow-well-met" air with which you are invariably greeted. There are many individuals to whom I personally have reason to be grateful; but if I may leave them out of account, it struck me that the exaggerated courtesy and polite punctilio which every Englishman must notice, had possibly the same cause as that to which, when I was in Macedonia, a consul attributed the polite manners of the inhabitants: "They have to be very polite to avoid the necessity of shooting one another." But in Boston, Philadelphia, and other smaller towns, where, if I observed rightly, this hard expression and apparent absorption of attention were no longer prevalent, it seemed to me that the working classes were not only fairly prosperous, but far more cheerful, more intelligent, more interested in life than the corresponding classes in England. And in general, amongst all those people who are evidently free from business responsibility, who may be junior employees of one kind or another, one notices an alertness, an interest in life, a hopefulness, which contrast with the anxious, jaded expression so commonly seen in English cities. I do not know whether, when the increased cost of living is taken into account, these people are really better paid than in England. But they are better educated, they have more opportunities, there is room for hope, and they have the heart to create for themselves a standard of living.

It seemed to me that the women employees whom one sees in business offices, in tea-shops, or travelling in cars, were of a higher average type than the men. The woman who "works" is respected in America; she commands a good wage; she apparently proves very efficient without having all the fineness of her sex driven out of her. She is decently

educated, she is not desperately over-worked, and she conforms to the American feminine fashion of improving her mind—a fashion which the man admires without imitating. In the wealthier classes, as in every country, this habit of improving the mind is apt to produce the *femme savante*. One man told me proudly that his wife was always studying, always gaining information on new subjects of information. He enumerated the languages she had mastered, the various physico-chemical sciences she had exhausted, the poets whom she had learnt by heart, and the philosophies she was about to add to her repertoire. I have felt that some of these cultured American women who know everything are often not only the least likeable, but also the least intelligent.

But the little game of culture which penetrates to the working classes has a sort of naïveté not without charm, though I can imagine it might be tiresome at close quarters. I remember snatches of a conversation which I overheard between a young man and woman who sat next to me one evening in the boat which plies between Boston and Nantucket Beach. The girl was apparently a waitress at a tea-shop. The man was a workman who had been in the army. The former confesses that she keeps a diary. She keeps it regularly. Does he keep one? No, but he did when he was in the army. It is a pity, she thinks, that he does not keep it now, for they might have compared notes. He is not very responsive, and obviously considers that this literary craze is commendable, but inconvenient. I know no more of the affair. But evidently already this little pride of fineness which was offended, this petty subtlety which was neglected, had interposed just the slightest barrier in the love-making. Perhaps the man was right to be impatient. Anyway it was a small matter. But these small matters may account for a woman's dissatisfaction, even for a sense of superiority.

And putting aside altogether the question of class, that sense of superiority of woman over man is, I believe, a very common feeling in America. Women may be vain, but they are not often really conceited, and their evidence in a matter of this sort is worth considering. I will not attempt to record such scanty evidence as I was in a position to collect. I should distrust any conclusions I might be

tempted to form on so difficult a subject. I may remark that an elderly New England gentleman, whom I revere, informed me that American women are freer in their social relations with men than any women in the world, but that their morals are beyond reproach. This praise did not astonish me, but I thought that perhaps "quite a little"—as my Detroit friend would have said—"quite a little" of the praise should be given to the men.

It may be that the women, being better read, and therefore in ideas more modern and cosmopolitan, are more self-conscious than the men; that they are more introspective, more various in their sentiment, therefore less easily satisfied by what is offered—being ready to give what in America it is denied that they should receive. However that may be, it is quite certain that at any rate the men possess a quality only to be found in young races or new countries—lack of self-consciousness. This is particularly noticeable in the young men of the Colleges. The Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate is absorbed in himself and conscious of himself, and it is for this reason that the modern young Englishman between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two is often so unbearable. But the average boy at Harvard or Yale—and I have had special opportunities of noticing—does not appear to be in a half-baked state of transition between schoolboy and man. He is still a boy whose strength and animal spirits have simply increased, who expresses his exuberant emotions without shame or restraint. He will laugh, sing, leap, or dance as the spirit moves him, and there will be no self-consciousness to dictate decorum or reserve. And when these youths have left College and have grown a little older there is still nothing to show that they have passed through stages of transition; they are the same save that they are a little older, a little less physically exuberant, a little shrewder, a little more business-like.

A nation of men free from the burden and the responsibility of self-consciousness, having the directness and the spontaneity of young schoolboys—here surely there is something which we shall never regain in Europe till our civilisation is broken up. However crude and unreflective these crowds of grown-up boys may be—and sometimes I seem to see them in crowds—it is wonderful to observe

their exuberance, their ready enthusiasms, their energy, and even their restlessness. And if they have no personal self-consciousness, they have that consciousness of the *institution* which is so strong in schoolboys, the institution of America. One marvels to find so many people, extraordinarily ignorant of Europe and European history, who have inherited the civilisation and the ideas of Europe without being aware of it, and assuredly without being grateful for it, whose minds think in terms of America and the American nation. It is extraordinary that a country so vast and so varied should be so constantly in their thoughts, should arouse so ardent a sense of nationality and ceaselessly inspire them to demonstrative patriotism. Little as they think of themselves as individuals, they are always thinking of America and the Americans. They are impressed with their own size, confident of their own achievements, assured of their future dominance of the world. As the Romans in the days of the still uncorrupted Republic first disdained and then patronised the Greeks, so the Americans first disdained, and have now reached the stage of patronising, the English. They will visit us to see our country and our buildings, certainly not ourselves. To adorn their robust Republic they will carry away a little of our decadent art and culture, or lead about one of our picturesque poets. They ask to be criticised, being confident that they ought to be praised. They have no doubts about themselves, they have the courage of their conviction; they see their vast irresistible Republic growing over the hemisphere, shaping and making the new civilisation of the world.

This energetic patriotism, this unwavering belief in themselves as a nation, is one of the qualities which lends such interest to their development. They are well aware that they are in a state of rapid transition, that they are growing into something monstrous and powerful; and it is not the few who talk about their growth, but the men and women everywhere, rich and poor, Americans of long lineage, Americans but recently absorbed. I doubt if they have moved so far from the days of Whitman and the Civil War as they are supposed to have moved. Even in those days they displeased the prejudiced Dickens; even to-day they are surely capable of shouting with Whitman the song

of the "tan-faced children." Their imagination is still occupied with the felling of primeval forests, the stemming of rivers, the upheaving of virgin soil; and the transition to the stock-market is not so very great. It is the next transition which will interest us more—the coming-of-age of this astonishing nation.

The Vanity of Death

By the Editor

ANTHROPOLOGY has dissolved of late years a good deal of the dogma attaching to orthodoxy, but quietly enough as we are now disposed to look upon death, negatively or positively, that is to say in its final or eternal bearing upon the human soul, the Western mind stands, as they say, aghast before the heroics of voluntary death, as exhibited by the recent suicide of General Nogi and his wife. Perhaps in no way does the West differ more humanly from the East than in this attitude of the two civilisations towards the morality—or vanity—of death. In the East death has the exact equation of life: it is the cheapest thing there is. It commands no fear, save for the physical agony of life's passing; no respect or mundane awe of mystery; it is Fate itself pure and simple, and, as the law and pleasure of Allah, it is so accepted.

When plague, war, famine, or what not devastation, human or divine, destroys a village, a province, a people, such visitation leaves no ethical sense, no doubt, no sentimentalising; the morrow ends the business; God is good and God is always for the best; death means no more to them than it does presumably to the animals. In the West we think otherwise. Death to us is a problem and a mystery which for centuries, chiefly of course owing to the teachings of Catholicism, has possessed the significance of a three-fold dispensation. Naturally, with the degrees of Heaven, Purgatory and Hell dangled before the imagination of man, he came to look on death with fear, as something awful, incalculable. He slew, tortured, decimated in the charitable cause of futurity. No wonder life went up in value when death was but the beginning of it; when no man but a saint or a cleric, a believer or an inquisitor, knew what posthumous lot would be his; and that death came to be

regarded as the most frightful of all uncertainties, instead, as in the East, of the most natural of endings following the laws of all atrophy.

To us, whether we approve or disapprove, the voluntary death of Nogi and his wife comes as a profound moral shock. Yet, oddly enough, the problem of death is with us too; brought to our notice, become almost a State question which the Churches, one would suppose, are bound to take heed of, by the action of the super-militant women who, when imprisoned justly according to the law, claim the right, by refusing to eat, of self-immolation. The case of the two ladies who set fire to a theatre in Dublin is in point, and it is one which, if followed as an example by all stout-hearted criminals, objectors, fanatics, or enthusiasts of a cause, might develop into a national cult of suicide on the lines of the Bushido in Japan.

Scientifically, there is no dishonour in death, though there may be much in life; therefore, there is no significance in it, as there is none in the animal world. It has been said, "there is no death"—but however beautiful this definition of Maeterlinck may be as an expression of literary picturesqueness, it cannot be accepted as logical, for there is admittedly a beginning, so that unless we are to regard man's span of life as a mere phase or accident in an interminable process of evolution, the one finality presupposes the other. Since it is the law of nature that a man comes into the world by no conscious effort or fault of his own, why then should he not have the right of his own mortality? If volition is as the tree of individual life from which we bloom and blossom according to our means into the higher expressions of humanity, why, as the one thing positive that we know about ourselves, may we not also control it, seeing that in death we release only what is absolutely and constructively ours? If there is no death, then plainly this life is of no consequential value at all; but if there is a death why, as there is the will to live, should we not as logically claim the right to die?

When we will, when the Churches, the State, Emperors, Kings, Man with his ambitions, hatreds, envies, and greeds, so please it, life is in fact held cheap enough, as cheap as

the law of prey governing the animal kingdom, and the death, or hundreds of deaths, of soldiers and sailors in battle represent no more in the history of nations than so many casualties. When we wish it, death, too, becomes a prize. "To die for one's country," for the flag, for the King, for what men artificially call a national cause—given the beating of the drum, however hollow, however vain, and death assumes at once the plausibility of a sacrament. We call it heroism then, though in reality it is often so much easier to die than to live—to live cleanly in the spirit of Christ. It is only when we think philosophically that we doubt; that we are apt to wonder whether the butchery of St. Bartholomew, the sectarian massacres which decimated Central Europe, the mad deaths of the millions religiously chronicled in the wars of our history books, give any man the right to speak upon the morality of death, as it concerns the individual or the community.

If it is wise and just for Governments and peoples to take life, for an idea or cause, nationally or punitively, has the individual not the same right over what alone is indestructibly his? A man has only life. It is all that he has in the world. He can create other life; on the other hand, the inevitability of all life is death, which is thus natural and as involuntary as his creation. If the State can honour him, as at Balaklava, for riding into death for a question about the Holy Places which certainly few, if any, of those noble six hundred understood either the rights or wrongs of, can it be wrong for a man to say to himself: "I am sick and useless," or "I am weary of the struggle," or simply "I am willing to die"—*adsum*—and there to put an end to it? By what law of nature is it necessary for a man to live? By what reason other than that of canonical law? By what condition, finally, of humanity?

"O death, where is thy sting?"

If that is so—and nothing finer or simpler has ever been said about it—wherefore is it wrong to die? And though these words are spoken by every ministrant at every burial service in the country, the trend of our whole civilisa-

tion is towards the accentuation of the vanity of life, even as the advance of science opens up more and more the mysteries surrounding creation. From the Catholic point of view, of course, the opposition to suicide is obvious enough. The individual who takes his own life escapes absolution—he thus escapes from the grip of the Church. He shuffles off his mortal coil—unaided. *Dubiæ spe pendulus horæ*. In scientific argument, this is the theory of casuistry, except perhaps economically viewed, in the spirit of the antagonism applied to the doctrine of the clergyman Malthus. On the other hand, the Catholic Church sees nothing to oppose in the Malthusian economy of life, so that even from the Catholic standpoint, it may logically be reasoned that if it is well to regulate the economy of life, so must there be a similar right in respect to death. Everything that is, we will agree, is not necessarily good. To permit the regulation of unconscious life which, for all we know, might be a good life, while prohibiting the regulation of the conscious, is surely a contradiction which in these days is an anachronism. And civilisations are returning to Malthus. Only in the East, where life is cheap, are populations increasing, which seems to show in practice that the dearer life is held the greater will be its economy; and this again is race suicide.

Were it not for what men loosely call politics, for the boundaries on maps, for princely, religious, racial, dynastic, and linguistic differentiation involving armies, ships, and the elaborate paraphernalia of artificial glory attaching to their successful manipulation, there could be no human reason why a nation should not regulate the exact economy of its life on the same principles as those determining the family of the individual who takes unto himself a wife. In France, as a fact, this has been partially the case, and, economically, the result has been approved. Individually, France is the richest country in Europe. Almost every girl in the country marries with a *dot*. And though alarmists, thinking always of the necessary "carrion of war," from time to time raise the palpitating cry of "*Faire des Gosses*," the fact remains that economically France is the most comfortable country in the world, where every seventh man seems to have a motor, and nearly every woman an occupa-

tion. The economic doctrine of Germany, on the other hand, is "mass-production," but that simply on the military axiom that possession is to the strong and that the greater the strength the more terrestrial will be the possession.

The reason of German State philosophy may be arbitrary, but it is convincing so long as civilisation indulges in the game of war and armaments, while incidentally it shows the difficulty of applying theory to man, who is by nature animalistic. Socially the question is only in its infancy, yet already its paradox is evident. In England the State discourages the regulation of life, and punishes its voluntary ending. The whole effort of the modern State is towards the preservation of individual life, whether evil, maimed, helpless, hopeless, or insane. The more the State assumes the functions and authority of national parentage, the more solicitous it grows towards the life of the individual, also the more timorous and indecisive. If Lord Roberts, let us suppose, had shot himself on the day of the funeral of the late King, a wave of horror and indignation would have passed over the land; the State in its capacity as Mother would have felt shocked, personally aggrieved. Yet before the death of Nogi the world bows down in silence. The difference is one of attitude. Men who can thus die are above reason or criticism. They become immortal, like ideas, like ideals, which are the things men serve and live for. In Japan, death is greater than life: it is thus well to die. In the West we have come to look upon death in a craven spirit. The thing is our duty to live.

We may not die. It is a queer thought, this slavery to life, we who in this great respect differ from the animals in that our lives are given to us in our own keeping. I do not know. I am not a member of any suicide club. I believe in life as the most wonderful and beautiful gift in the world. But sometimes I ask myself by what right, human or divine, is man thus doomed to bondage? He may starve—he does. His whole life may be passed in misery and suffering, in crime, in madness, in waste and useless traffic, in wantonness and unloveliness, but he may not die; he may not end the misery, the sorrow, the in-

dignity, the disease, the utter degradation of the conditions that are eating into his soul, he, poor unit, sole master when all is said and done of his own individuality, while England is expending nearly a hundred million pounds a year to keep up and teach men to kill others as quickly and efficiently as possible for any reason that arbitrarily may be given to them.

The Law is severe enough on a poor girl who has got into trouble (as the saying is), and seeks to take her life. But let a question of lineage arise; if an ambassador put out his tongue at an emperor; let there be some squabble among the Powers over mines or the priority of the rights of spoliation and expropriation, and at once it is an honour to kill and to die, and death is a national glory. There must be something amiss with this elastic conception of our duty to life. Nor can I admit that suicide is a cowardly act. It may be—as much as some forms of heroism are foolish. But voluntary death is never likely to be popular, even if for a time following on its permission, like the operation of appendicitis, it should become fashionable. In reality, it is a sign of virility. The Greeks and Romans practised it, even in the heyday of their achievements. Their emasculacy and deterioration were not due to any habit that they abused of falling on their swords. The very contrary. And who thinks worse of Cleopatra that she died from the bite of an aspic, "like a lover's pinch, which hurts and is desired"?

We may not die, the Church and the State tell us, but what does the Church and State do for us when we live? If it is the duty of very man born into the world to live in it so long as life lasts, if it is an offence to posterity to die, surely it is the duty of the State to see to it that every family of the country should have an income sufficient to enable it to maintain its members in decency and comfort. We talk about the duty of life, but what does our civilisation do for those who have to live the life? We know, as the result of the investigations of Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Booth, that about 30 per cent. of our population is underfed, living on the verge of hunger, doubtful day by day of the sufficiency of their food. On any given day

the number of persons in receipt of Poor Relief is about 900,000, while the annual expenditure in relief of the poor by Boards of Guardians in England and Wales is about £15,000,000. In the face of such figures we need not fear an outbreak of suicide. The really extraordinary thing—the splendid thing—is that some half a million a year, say, out of the estimated twelve millions bordering on the verge of hunger do not put an end to an existence which is nothing less than servitude. As an answer to all argument denouncing the cowardice of suicide, the magnificent attachment of the poor to life would seem in itself sufficient. The courage of these lives is one of the most astounding realities in the world. In the centre of our materialistic and complex modern societies it is perhaps the most hopeful.

Granted that it is a man's duty to live, then assuredly he may claim the right to live—decently and adequately. It is the problem of modern civilisation. To life, death means nothing; men, therefore, are not likely to die. But some day they may rise up in nations and communities, and demand the right to live decently, which, after all, is the essential. To punish men or women for seeking to end their lives, while permitting something like 30 per cent. of the whole to live in abject and chronic misery, is unworthy of any State purporting to be scientific or human or Christian. What is vital in the State, in art, in realisation of any sort, is life. For our life's purpose in this world, death is simply its negation. It is what we do here, now, that matters: that lives after us. When we are gone, who knows? *Ma foi*, who cares?

Non-religiously viewed, the natural fear that a man has of death lies only in the finality of it—in the idea that his life is over and done with—just as the only intelligent understanding that we have of immortality is a vitality. Such a conception as eternity, apart from its theological sense, is as incomprehensible as the infinitude of space. Actually, humanity is the sole business of man. As we slough the confusions and dogma of the old ecclesiastical structure, we find an ever-increasing simplicity in the design and patterns of life. Our thoughts, and even our inspirations, are becoming more and more vested upon

this earth, our minds have become greater than our spirits. Yet if there is less faith or religion in the world, it can be said that there is more interest, more humanity, more attainment, on the whole even more goodwill. If we are growing less Christian in the ecclesiastical sense, we are become more Christ-like, more humane. We have learnt to respect science, discovery, fact, reality. Our deities are more tangible—they are the revelations of man himself. In the place of theism, knowledge is the force which sways the modern world. As we learn and know, civilisation grows more sensitive and responsive to the exigencies of its own humanities, more confident, lustrous and confiding. "Those whom the gods love grow young."

The positive purpose of death is thus life. About all else, the after-life, what Michelet called the *désintéressement des Morts*, we are still ignorant. In the sequence of evolution, death is the trap-door of life. We can imagine life without death, as we can conceive of a law of perpetual motion. But death without life is unthinkable; it is the negation of the negation. We do not, therefore, live to die—in China men kill themselves for the avenging spirit that will confound an enemy—for that would imply a vitality and purpose in death which, so far as we are aware or can conceive of, it cannot have—we die rather to live. If evolution is the law of organic life, then death, it would seem, must be its natural agent and renewer, its cleanser, its perpetuator. Why, then, should a man fear what is so simple, natural, and apparent in every other form of organic life? Why, in fine, should he constitute himself, either the individual or the State, its guardian or defender? Why should he punish those who, for some reason good or bad, best known to themselves in any case, are willing to make way for others?

To make way for others. Is that all? Is that the philosophy of death? A mere process of renewal! How can any man know? And yet, why not? The soul of life, of the earth, of what we know of existence is fulness, harvest, replenishment, the repetition of night and day. The wheel goes round always across the living and the dead; time is only the concern and contrivance of man. Creation! If

that is our reason, may it not also be the meaning of our end? Then what is there to fear? *Il faut vouloir vivre, il faut savoir mourir*, Napoleon said, and he knew something about death, too. The fear of death is a weakness in our Western civilisation, for to fear death is to fear also in life. I think of life as the dawn and purpose of the morrow. I like to think of death as the sleep and restfulness of night.

Our Gentlemen's Schools Again

By A. C. Benson

[I]

It made me rather melancholy the other day to read a *Domum* speech by the Headmaster of Winchester, in which he summed up his theory of public-school education. He said that modern subjects were "invading the sanctuary" of the school; that at Winchester they were "hanging on for dear life, and would do so, while he had any voice in the matter, to the priceless inheritance of Greek." "Still," he added, "while holding on to the classics, they were holding out a hand to the new knowledge. They could both exist and flourish side by side with mutual respect."

The reason why I deplore this utterance is, in the first place, because it comes with special significance from one of the official heads of public-school education, and therefore comes with authority. Moreover, Mr. Rendall is a man of high and varied culture, with a knowledge of art and modern literature; and it is not, therefore, the utterance of a man who is likely to undervalue what he calls the new knowledge. If he were a man of limited horizon, and with a pedantic academical standard, it could have been genially discounted; but this is not the case at all; he is open at all points to wide and elastic influences, and this throws into relief the despondent tenacity of the survey. He speaks as though he were the commandant of a fortress in a land of foes, desperately clinging to civilisation among a horde of barbarians. The rueful dignity of the tone is such as might have prevailed at a debate of the Roman Senate when the Gauls had beleaguered the city. It is what Obadiah might have said, when the land was overrun with idolaters, and when he hid the Lord's prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them on bread and water! Is it indeed true that the public schools have become fortresses and caves, where the elect are fed on highly insufficient

nourishment? "Holding on for dear life"—that is a very gloomy metaphor, and it is hardly helped by the dignified *bonhomie* with which the Headmaster assures us that Winchester is still holding out a hand to the new and presumably inferior knowledge, which may even be conceded some species of respect, so long as the respect between the new and the old is mutual.

Is it in any sense true that the public schools are the guardians of the old high culture; and is the new culture —science, English literature, foreign literature, history, political science, economics—of so proved and tested a weakness? It is, of course, true that the best boys are still reserved at public schools for the study of the classics, because the classics are still richly subsidised at the Universities by scholarships and fellowships; and it is equally true that modern sides, largely recruited from boys destined for commercial careers, and whose mental calibre does not justify the prolongation of their education, have produced very indifferent results. But is the situation past mending? Must boys, whose staple nourishment is to be the classics, remain in a sort of mediæval dream, blissfully unconscious of the opening thought of the world, its visions, its hopes, its ideas, its problems? Is culture really not attainable on modern lines? Must the Universities continue to hedge themselves round by a fence of Latin and Greek, and must the pabulum of the average passman in consequence be a dreary meal of scraps, all elementary, all imperfectly digested? These are some of the questions that a reactionary utterance like Mr. Rendall's arouses. Let us see how things actually stand.

[2]

I have myself had unusual opportunities for seeing the problem at both stages. I taught classics as a public-school master for nearly twenty years; and I have taught Literature and English for nearly ten at the University; so that I have seen what we did for the boys at school, and how we prepared them for the University; and I see now how well they have been prepared, and what their tastes and inclinations are.

Now I am in no sense an opponent of the classics for the right boys. I think that all boys whose profession is going to involve the use of words are bound to have some acquaintance with both Latin and Greek; any real breadth of culture is almost impossible without them, even though I hold that they are taught in far too cumbrous and elaborate a way. There is much too much grammar and idiom taught, and composition in these dead languages is for almost all a melancholy waste of time. If one desired to get a boy into touch with Hebrew, one would go straight for the Literature; one would not try to make him write prose like Exodus and poetry like the Psalms. If one wanted a boy to get an inkling of Italian culture, one would not set him to translate scraps of Spenser into the Italian of Dante. The claim made for Latin and Greek is that a boy becomes familiar with Greek ideas and Roman views of life; but, as a matter of fact, he does neither, because they are only taught incidentally and fortuitously. Just as a boy could get more insight into Jewish thought by reading the Old Testament in English than by writing Hebrew verse, so much of what is now done in Greek and Latin by daily snippets of Sophocles and Livy could be done freely and easily by translations. The truth is that the Classicists do not really know what they are at. They claim that their curriculum is literary, when it is for average boys not even linguistic, but only gymnastic. The teachers of the Classics are not themselves intimately acquainted as a rule with Greek life and thought. It is true that Greek literature has a supreme importance in high culture, which Latin literature does not possess; the real importance of the Greeks lay in their ideas; of the Romans in their history; and yet both languages are studied in just the same way, on grammatical and philological lines.

The plain truth is that if classics are to be studied so minutely and elaborately, there is no time for anything else; and the catastrophic breakdown of the classics as a vehicle of general education is due to this: that other subjects have been forced in, and that while they have made it impossible for classics to be taught thoroughly, the classics still prevent other subjects from being taught thoroughly; so we get an elementary dilettanteism all along the line.

The only cure for this dull congestion is frankly to have more alternatives and higher standards; and we must provide that classics, if they are to be retained at all, should be taught reasonably and directly, exactly as one would teach any other language, if one wanted a boy to arrive at any mastery of its literature.

The whole subject really divides itself into two quite distinct considerations: the intellectual motive and the utilitarian motive. Let us take the two separately and consider them; because the mistake made by so many theorists is to jumble up the two together, and when they are attacked about the inefficiency of either method, to take refuge behind the other motive. If the classics are impugned, it is claimed that they make the mind into a perfect instrument for utilitarian purposes; while if the inefficiency of practical education is pointed out, the theorists cling pathetically to culture as their supreme aim.

[3]

Culture first. Let it be plainly faced that there is very little demand for culture at all in England, and very little comprehension of what it is. Culture in the best sense is a certain zest of mind and nimbleness of apprehension; it betrays itself, as it did among the Greeks, in a lively intellectual curiosity, a keen appreciation of beauty, an interest in thought, a horror, not of ignorance so much as of dulness; a desire to apprehend ideas, to discuss them, to appreciate them; the exact opposite of culture is the frame of mind so common among Englishmen which expresses itself by saying that one is glad that one does not know so much about a subject as old So-and-so, because it must be so awfully dull! A mind in that condition cannot connect the increase of knowledge with any multiplication of pleasure; another sign of the absence of culture is the habit of deriding the studies of other specialists; a classical man who talks contemptuously about dry mathematical formulæ, or a mathematical man who speaks insolently about Greek roots, are alike uncultured men, unable to conceive of mental activity except on their own private lines. A lack of imaginative sympathy in intellectual matters is a sure sign of intellectual barbarism.

Culture is not an accomplishment, it is an atmosphere; but the English view of it is that it is a special sort of accomplishment, like high-jumping, which a man may indulge in if he does it well enough to make it profitable either in money or reputation. Culture is a thing you take up, if it pays. The whole thing is thought eclectic and amateurish, and is only justified on grounds of profitable specialism. The reason why the public schools do not tend to produce culture is partly that the parents do not demand it or desire it, partly that schoolmasters themselves too often dislike it, partly the lack of time and the aridity of the curriculum. It is not exactly despised; but it is a thing which you may do, but need not do, and in any case must not talk about in public.

The normal Englishman has in this respect advanced very little beyond the normal Anglo-Saxon of the tume of Beowulf; it is rather awful to track a vein of hereditary temperament back into the ages, and to find an Anglo-Saxon hero whose chief occupations were the amassing of treasures, predatory or complimentary, and the bragging about his exploits over his cups. We cannot, perhaps, do much to change national temperament; but let us not delude ourselves in the matter. Let us face the fact that culture is a thing not valued, and rather suspected; that it is thought to be an occupation for people who have not got to earn their living, and who may work off their energies over artistic tastes and little refinements of speech. There is no diffusion of culture; it is a secluded pursuit. Sometimes the democracy makes an eager claim for the Universities to come forward and hand over some of their culture; the democracy believes it to be a kind of secret hoard, like old wine, which Oxford and Cambridge keep in their cellars; but culture cannot be handed about in small parcels; it cannot be trafficked in; if you know what it is, you have got it; it is not a question of how much knowledge you have under lock and key; it is an attitude of mind, a responsiveness, a sympathy, a curiosity. It is not hidden in books and libraries or the minds of Dons; in fact, many of us are just as bankrupt in the commodity as the democracy who bid us stand and deliver.

And of all absurd delusions the delusion that culture can be won by the grammatical and philological study of

Latin and Greek is the absurdest; if a boy or a man cannot see that the flame of it was burning in the Greek mind with an incredible brightness, he cannot hope to learn its secret. Every obstacle is put in a boy's way; irregular verbs, parsing, Greek exercises, Latin prose, construing lessons—the dullest method of wasting time over an irritating and useless process ever invented—all these are screens to hide what is going on inside. If a boy struggles through all this, as able boys do, and sees as in a flash all the delicate beauty and fine vividness of the restless, inquisitive, joyful Greek spirit, he has won something worth winning; but the majority of boys are kept playing leapfrog and doing gymnastics in the ante-room, and for this disgrace it must be confessed that Universities and public schools are alike to be held answerable. But deeper down is the absence of all demand for intellectual curiosity. No amount of elegant persiflage or of prophetical bitterness will mend that! A public school provides a healthy, active, manly life, good discipline, plenty of air and exercise. The parent wants that, and he swallows the curriculum for the sake of it. "Let 'em 'ave it!" said the vulgar parent to the schoolmaster who talked of the curriculum, believing it to be an instrument of flagellation. It is as though stimulants could only be obtained at grocers' shops by a *bonâ fide* customer. A man who wants brandy will then consent to buy an egg, even if it be addled; and a parent who wants the active, pleasant, wholesome, spirited life of the public school for a boy will take it at the price of a poor intellectual education, and only grumble a little at the end when he finds that his boy knows hardly any classics, and has no sort of practical efficiency in other lines. As for culture! Well, that is an affected and stuffy thing, and the boy had better be without it; it is nearly as bad as mysticism or sacerdotalism; not even the fashion!

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And now we turn to the utilitarian motive of education. The better kind of schoolmaster is too apt to regard this as not only a negligible thing, but as a thing which must be resolutely fought against. It is an unfortunate position

to take up, because the simple truth is that an education which does not fit a boy for earning his living is, *ipso facto*, a fraud. The public schools ought to keep in sight a hard and solid core of utilitarian education. They ought to see that every boy who leaves a public school writes a good legible hand, can spell satisfactorily, can express himself clearly in English, can read French easily and write simple French correctly, can calculate in arithmetic rapidly and accurately, and has a general outline knowledge of European history, modern geography, and popular science. A boy who had these accomplishments would be in a position to earn his living, and it would not require anything like all the working hours for the eight or nine years of school life to give him this range of efficiency. I am not saying that the duty of public schools ends there; but it certainly begins there; and yet the above list of simple requirements is hardly ever attained at all. Even for an average boy this curriculum would leave a considerable margin of time in which his special tastes and aptitudes could be developed. Moreover, in order to train a boy to be a citizen, he ought to have developed some taste or other for the employment of his leisure time. That is a perfectly fair utilitarian motive. Able boys before the end of their school life should, to a certain extent, specialise; but specialisation has its dangers, and ought to be carefully watched. One finds public-school masters declaiming against over-specialisation, although the principle has now been practically admitted; they say that general education ought to be kept in sight all the time; but that is exactly what the type of education I have outlined above is, and it is precisely what is not safeguarded in the public schools. The classics, with classical history and geography, are in no sense a general education. They are a very definite kind of specialism, and what public-school authorities do not know or do not confess is that boys trained on strict classical lines are all of them specialists, and suffer, as all specialists suffer, from a neglect of general education. What is to be deplored is that boys leave the public schools so entirely and contentedly ignorant of the conditions and problems of the modern world; it is true that classics, when they became the staple of education, did represent the higher culture as against mediæval tradition, which was mainly

theological and scholastic. But then modern literature, history, geography, science were practically non-existent, and classics are now by no means the whole of culture, but a very small part of it. Yet the result on an average boy of a classical education at school and the University is that if he enters a commercial career he has generally to learn French and arithmetic, and actually to go back to doing copies! I am not now pleading for a utilitarian education pure and simple; I am only pleading for it as an integral part, the basis, in fact, of all effective education. That is the extreme difficulty of the situation, that schools and Universities have two duties: to develop high intellectual qualities, and to provide for civic efficiency; and what they too often do is to sacrifice the possibilities of the latter to the interests of the more intellectual. The reason why Greek is maintained as a compulsory subject is not because it has any value, either practical or intellectual, for average boys, but because it is feared that if it is made a special subject, there will be schools which will not be able to afford to have it taught; and so, in order to save it for the abler boys, a cataract of excellent material from the practical point of view pours steadily into the gulf of inefficiency: and not only that; there are a good many fairly able boys who just have not got the special linguistic and literary ability needed for the classics, who are sacrificed as well. It would be incredible, were it not true, that the common sense of Englishmen allows this farcical standard to prevail, and makes no serious effort to withstand the scholastic custom, which is based upon the fact that so many schoolmasters have been elaborately trained on classical lines that it is the only subject they are equipped to teach.

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Now let me carry the whole question a stage further, to the University. What does one find there? Let me say at once that intellectual ability is developed there with a high degree of efficiency. An honour man is well taught, and the standards are high. Where the older Universities can be fairly criticised is in their almost cynical neglect of the interests of pass-men. The pass examinations are

the result of a very negligent compromise. The range of subjects is fairly wide, and the result is that the standard is deplorably low. More alternatives and higher standards are, again, what are wanted. But it is to the interests of the teachers to keep as many subjects as possible in the curriculum, and the result is a perfectly contemptible hodge-podge of elementary subjects. Moreover, the examinations are so spaced as to make it possible for men of moderate capacity to spend certain terms in comparative idleness, and to cram up their subjects before their examinations.

My own work has mainly been essay-teaching; and here the result of public-school training is very apparent. Men come up without the least training in thought. They cannot arrange a subject, they cannot express themselves in English. I am bound to say that I do not find a lack of intellectual curiosity. The men, as a rule, do become interested in working out subjects of a general kind, and improve rapidly in expression. Indeed, my conclusion is that the intellectual faculties have often been simply in abeyance at the public schools. So little has been done to stimulate such interests, so little attempt has been made to encourage special aptitudes, that boys seem to me to have fallen into a kind of cynical apathy about intellectual things. I do not mean that the public-school life is either cynical or apathetic; it is, on the contrary, simple and energetic; but athletics and social interests have preponderated so completely that boys, finding no intellectual stimulus in their lessons, have got into the way of treating them as office-work, to be faithfully performed, and flinging themselves for amusement and occupation into the ardent and concentrated life of the school, into games, and talk about games, and gossip, and social combinations; all excellent things and producing a very wholesome and manly type, clean-minded without being prudish, unaffected, straightforward, sincere. I do not think it is possible to exaggerate the fineness of the type in its self-possession, its sense of duty, its generous subordination; but it still seems to me that there has been a waste of energies, that the definitely educational part of the programme has been dull and uninteresting; and that though a few boys may have picked up tastes from the influence of intelligent masters, yet they

are essentially private tastes, to be cultivated quietly, and not adapted for general conversation. What I wish to see and do not see is an active faith in young men's minds in the work they have been doing; but they tend to regard it as having been both uninteresting and useless. Boys speak of their masters with respect, of their school with pride, but of their work, constantly and publicly, with contempt and dislike.

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And yet the thing does not work out in practice as badly as might be expected. One may frankly admit that, while one may wish it altered. There is an institution at Cambridge known as the Appointments Board, which keeps in touch with employers of various kinds, and recommends men to fill posts. I have had a good deal to do with the Board, and it is interesting and satisfactory to find a rapidly increasing demand on the part of employers for men of the ordinary public-school type. They have a preference for honour-men, as indicating a certain standard of capacity; but they constantly say that they do not want boys to be trained in commercial accomplishments. They prefer to teach them those in their own way. What they want is general intelligence, and that unique power of dealing with other people without either pretension or servility which the public school undeniably produces. The power of getting on well with others, the power of good-humoured obedience, of faithfully discharging an uncongenial task, is half the battle in every walk of life. And it may even be claimed for the public-schools that, in their disregard of aptitudes, they do teach boys to produce conscientiously and carefully work in which they are wholly uninterested; though it would be sophistical to say that this was the main object of an elaborate intellectual education!

Neither is it in the smallest degree true to say, as has lately been alleged, that the public schools and universities produce a crop of wastrels and loafers; that is simply a grotesque travesty of the truth. Mr. Wells, tutor of Wadham College, Oxford, has produced some interesting figures on this point. Between October, 1903, and June, 1907, 155 men were admitted to the College. Of these

men 37 are clergymen, 29 are in the Civil Service, 20 are teachers, 18 are in some branch of the law, 12 are in business, 18 are in various other professions, making a total of 133 men regularly employed; while only 22 are described as "uncertain or unsettled at present," and these are chiefly men from the Colonies who have been lost sight of.

A little piece of statistics is worth a great deal of theoretical talk, and the above figures make it clear that Oxford affords a very fair training for civic efficiency.

The fault which I should venture to find, then, with the system is not that a creditable amount of practical efficiency does not result, but that the intellectual side of the public education of Englishmen does not keep efficiency directly enough in view. And then I would go further and say that I believe the graver fault is that, through a rigid tradition of education, the intellectual side of education is practically disregarded for all who are not specialists. That is where I believe that we fail, in our lack of intelligence, our disbelief in ideas. It seems to me that these qualities could perfectly well be communicated by schools and Universities without trenching in the smallest degree on the training in common sense and manliness which schools and Universities do communicate.

The Englishman is supremely competent to establish excellent relations with his colleagues and inferiors, and to do his work in a trustworthy and mechanical way. Where he fails is in his lack of origination, of grasp, of seeing possibilities. We must not be too confident in the force of unassisted and unaffected character. As the world grows in complexity, the intellectual element plays a constantly larger part in the organisation of affairs; and there is no doubt whatever that the advantages which have been gained over us, especially in commercial matters, both by Germany and America, are due not to any inferiority on our part in physique or moral qualities, but solely to our intellectual inferiority.

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One ought not to criticise points of failure without suggesting a remedy; and I believe that the best remedy at the present time would be for a Royal Commission to

deal with the whole subject of secondary education at school and University, to insist on breaking down the high and dry tradition of classical culture, and the grievous congestion of the curriculum. To insist on more alternatives and higher standards, to devise a system by which the central core of education should be really general and efficient, while allowing emphasis to be laid upon special aptitudes. The fault of the public-school system is that while the curriculum is so elaborate and yet so vague, the masters labour under a tremendous pressure, each fighting for his own subject, and trying to retain the allegiance of all boys to his own special branch; an enormous mass of time is wasted in trying to make boys efficient in subjects for which they have no sort of capacity, and to set masters free from trying to keep boys up to a low standard in subjects which have no appeal to them, either of interest or usefulness, would be to remove a burden of much conscientious and futile work. If the same system could be carried on to the Universities, so as to allow men to follow their aptitudes, to encourage regular work, to demand a higher standard, an immense benefit might be secured without any sacrifice of either intellectual development or practical efficiency.

One of the real faults of the English character is its *laissez-faire* opportunism. If a system is there and can be made to do, the impulse is to say, "Can't you leave it alone? What is the use of fussing?" In looking back over my schoolmastering experience, I do deeply regret the awful waste of time and energy in the half-hearted attempt to force quite unsuitable work on indifferent boys. All that such boys developed was an extraordinary power of abstracting the mind from all possible impressions. It is exactly as though one insisted on teaching all boys the violin, for the sake of being sure that really musical boys had an opportunity of learning it!

What I really desire to see is that, whatever happens, all boys should get some inkling of what is actually going on in the world, how it comes to be going on, what is being aimed at. The abler a boy is, the further back into the past, into the causes and origins of affairs, he can be conducted. But we begin at the wrong end; we teach all boys the origins, and hope that they may struggle on to the

apprehension of things as they are; and this they will not do if they are not taught it, and still less if their curiosity is elaborately extinguished. I want to invade the feudal fortresses and sanctuaries in which men are holding on for dear life to a culture which I believe to be essentially sterile; not for the sake of affronting the old dignities, but to destroy privilege and monopoly; to teach boys to face the world as it is, with all its vast energies and problems, rather than to initiate them painfully and unsuccessfully into ideas which, however fertile and inspiring they have been, are yet the forces of a vanished time.

The Tyranny of the Countryside

By F. E. Green

NINE months ago Sir A. Quiller Couch declared in *Public Opinion* that in performing his duties as a County Councillor of Cornwall he found, when passing from the town to the country, he passed from the homes of the free to the homes of the unfree. "Furthermore," he added, "I regret to have to put it brutally. But if you really want to know where, in my opinion, lies England's one chance of regaining her alleged pride in a bold peasantry, I answer, 'In the bold peasantry having the boldness to organise a strike.'"

Now, no one could accuse "Q" of being a syndicalist, and yet his assertion leads one to suppose that he regards Parliament as an instrument too slow in its action for bettering the conditions of the agricultural labourer; and the utterances in the article referred to, instead of being expressed by a distinguished novelist, might surely have been taken from a speech by Mr. Tom Mann!

Fortunately, or unfortunately, a general strike amongst labourers is little likely to take place, for though our peasantry is still our largest class, it is certainly the worst organised. It is a class which is not vocal. It is a class which has not a single representative in Parliament. The peasant does not organise; he does not strike. If he can manage to escape unburdened by debt or family, he quietly knots his red handkerchief, and sullenly sets his face towards that lurid light in the sky, which at nightfall betokens a town with its compelling lure of a life of greater freedom.

If he be young and lusty, and has a few golden coins to jingle in his pocket, he may escape altogether from the Mother Country and renounce his nationality. If he be a youth who is walking out with his lass, he, too, is to be seen setting his face towards the town; for as cottages tumble down or are compulsorily closed, he will have to seek

a roof for himself and his future wife where chimneys are closer together and where even the jerry-builder is joyously hailed as a philanthropist. On his way out of the village he may pass the Village Institute, and, in spite of its warm, friendly red blinds, its bagatelle table, its library of sermons and sporting journals, its pictures of saints, of crowned heads and politicians, he will probably shake the dust of his native village off his iron-shod boots without regret. He wants a cottage, and no landlord or public body will build it. He wants, too, better wages; 12*s*., 15*s*., or even 18*s*. a week is not good enough, he avers, to look forward to, nor a sum large enough on which to found and nourish an Imperial Race. Above all, he wants greater freedom. He seeks a place where he can meet many others like himself on terms of comradeship—some place where the eye of his employer-landlord is not upon him during his leisure as well as his working hours.

If he be middle-aged, and there is a wife and five or six children living under a roof let to him by his employer, and though rain may leak through that roof, should there be no money wherewith to pay his removal expenses, let alone settling up with the village tradesmen, he must remain a crushed, disheartened, lifeless man, with nothing to look forward to but a dreary life of unremitting toil, unrelieved by festivals or Holy Days. So he stays, and becomes the man whose portrait is seared for ever on our consciences in the burning words of Edward Markham:

> Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
> Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
> The emptiness of ages in his face
> And on his back the burden of the world.

Yet is it impossible that the agricultural labourer should strike? History has an odd trick of repeating herself. It may be that some day we shall awaken to learn that the most patient, the most docile, and the most stubborn of all our workers, who supplies us with our daily bread, has at last been stung into open revolt.

He broke into revolt in 1830: and the revolt with alarming rapidity spread over the Southern and Midland Counties like a prairie fire, though these were the days before the telegraph wire, the steam engine, and the capable Trade Union organiser.

In 1795 his wife, unable to get food for her children, broke into a still more remarkable revolt. Simultaneously, in counties as far apart as Nottingham and Gloucester, labourers' wives commandeered millers' carts and butchers' shops, and even held up a ship about to set sail from Bristol, filled with grain reaped from the fields that they had gleaned.

To-day, a general strike amongst labourers should be easier to organise if the great industrial trade unions directed the revolt. But if it were ever brought about, it would become something more than a strike—the nation would be riven in two. And if perchance the peasant class were broken in pieces, we should have destroyed the greatest artery that nourishes the heart of our Empire. Should it drift, as a class, from the open fields into the fœtid slums of our towns to seek the greater freedom to be found there, our unique place as a maritime Power would be doomed. Doctors tell us that after three generations, born and bred Cockneys become sterile. It is the despised yokel who rejuvenates our cities, who recruits our army, and mans our ships of war. There is a Russian saying that the peasant "must be boiled in the factory pot before a revolution can succeed." Though the English village labourer enters no factory, his son does; and when once the Jolly Roger is hoisted, the Red Ensign will dip to it.

That there is a social unrest in our fields as well as in our factories, who can doubt? Because it is reticent and does not flaunt itself; because it makes no inflammatory speeches—*that* does not prove that there is no unrest. It is true that no words of burning oratory spring from the lips of members of Parliament portraying the life of the peasant; it is true that no single organ proclaims the wrongs of the village labourer. Nevertheless, the evidence lies startlingly revealed to all those who have eyes to see—in the empty and silent places of our countryside. Hodge works as an isolated unit in the midst of large and lonely fields, and it is only when an eviction takes place that the ordinary citizen is aware of anything wrong in Arcadia.

Such an eviction took place on the 21st of January of this year at Foxham, in Wiltshire, when with snow upon the ground, several cottagers with their families were

turned out of their homes on to the roadside. In the following month, a landlord in the adjoining county promptly evicted tenants for complaining of the want of cottage accommodation. He, though, was merely following the example set by public bodies. Confronted by a housing problem, he must either let it settle itself—a plan much favoured by the Local Government Board—by waiting until the overcrowded denizens had drifted into towns, or adopt a method prevalent in the Middle Ages, and known as "decanting"—that is, telling the people they were too thick upon the ground, rendering his cottages insanitary, and that those who were not required to do service on the lord's estate must seek fresh woods and pastures new.

It will now have been made clear, I think, that the tyranny I write about is something deeper rooted in peasant life than the tyranny of political intimidation over which Liberal orators wax eloquent at election time—especially if a Conservative happen to get elected. It is economic rather than political. It is the tyranny that endures long after the wave of political passion has passed; and if one of the governing classes is to be indicted more than another, it is certainly the large farmer class.

Rural England was once ruled by its magistracy. To-day it is ruled by the large farmers. It is this class more than any other which is bringing about the decay of rural England. Perhaps, though, it would be hard to say whether the large farmer, in his desire to add field to field and to prevent the agricultural labourer from getting land or living in cottages independent of him as landlord, or the large landowner who, in his insatiable lust to obtain large partridge drives, huge pheasant preserves, and vast rabbit warrens, has done the greater harm to our most virile class of workers, and through them struck a blow at the heart of our Empire.

The demon of political intimidation is always one difficult to scotch. It has often evaded both political parties in the Law Courts. It is as elusive, as intangible, as a ghost. Nevertheless, it is as real as a ghost to those who fear retribution from some unseen power. Many rural magnates are clever enough to cast the shadow of fear over the mind of the labouring poor without showing the hand

of flesh that throws the shadow. Few adopt the rude method of a village publican known to me who said to a labourer, "If you don't vote for so-and-so, we'll make it hot for you in this village"; and few are as stupid as a millionaire in a neighbouring parish, who stated in print that if the Budget candidate were elected he would have to reduce his staff of chauffeurs, gardeners, and footmen. The Budget was passed, however, and, strange to say, this millionaire has exactly the same number of servants as he had before.

Political intimidation cuts both ways. I have attended Liberal meetings in the country where I have seen Tory coachmen lustily singing Radical songs of freedom under the approving eye of their Liberal mistress who sat upon the platform.

Recently I visited a little country town where there is practically one employer of labour only. He employs two thousand hands in his factory, and he is a Liberal. I called upon one of his employees, who, I was told, was interested in small holdings. "Do you mind speaking to me outside?" whispered this free Briton who flew the Liberal colours. "The Guv'nor's all right, you know, but as he owns twenty-five farms and most of the cottages in the town, he does not approve of the Small Holdings Act, nor of the Town Planning Act, nor of the Insurance Act"!

Now, you may tell Hodge that he is better off than was his grandfather. You may tell him that his great-grandfather lived in a time when he dared not leave his parish without permission from a magistrate; when wages were practically fixed by these magistrates, who also administered the Poor Law; when he stood in danger of being harnessed to the parish cart whilst the commons were being daily stolen from him by Acts of Parliament passed by landowners only; when he might be imprisoned for collective bargaining, or transported for snaring a rabbit or for being seen at night in a wood or park in search of the fuel of which he had been deprived by the Enclosure Acts. You may tell him that his grandfather had neither the vote nor free education, that wages were 8*s.* a week, and bread 1*s.* the gallon loaf. And then, if you are a politician, you will wisely recount to Hodge how he has

not only a vote, but also free education. You will tell him of the rural Magna Charta of 1894, of the Housing and the Public Health Acts, of the Small Holdings Act, of the Insurance Act, and, above all, of the Old Age Pension Act.

Then what will Hodge answer? Probably nothing at all. He has grown tired of candidates for Parliament, and will keep sullenly away from the ballot-box, as the Liberal Party found to its cost and its amazement at the last General Election. If he be communicative, he may answer something like this—for as one who works with him in the fields I may be allowed to express his feelings in something like his own language:—

"What you say may have been true enough in my great-granddad's time, though when *I* went to school our history-book told us nothing about these Enclosure Acts. It seemed to jump right clean from the French Revolution to the Battle of Waterloo, and end there. Granddad did say as to how the poor were robbed of their land in our parish, and that's how it is that no cottage folk now can keep a cow nor any geese. I heard, too, a man in one of those travelling vans tell of it, and how the House of Lords made a fuss over the likes of us hiring land, though we had to pay for it twice as dear as the farmer pays for his. Yes, and how granddad did nearly starve to death when bread was so dear. Father has told us that too. And now we have what you call the rural Magna Charta, free education, and all those other Acts you speak about. But are we any better off than our *fathers*—not than our grandfathers. That's how we look at it. Can we get any more for our sovereign than they did? Do we stand up any bolder than they did in front of the farmer or the squire? I am a married man with a family. I have to pay for nearly everything more than what my father did, and rents are going up more than wages. Do you think I can leave my parish any more than my great-grandfather? Well, I tell you straight, I can't. I have a family to bring up on 15*s.* a week; some weeks I get less, when regular wet weather sets in, or the land is frozen or snowbound; and if I keep my children well shod and their stomachs full, I gets behind with the tradesmen in the village, and we *can't* leave. Though sometimes our dinner is only potatoes, we never

seems to have enough money saved to pay for moving even our few sticks. How am I better off, then? You tell me that there are Housing Acts for us. To keep my children decent some of them ought now to have separate bedrooms; but do you think I am going to complain to my master, who lets me the cottage, or to the sanitary inspector? Not I. I should only get turned out on to the roadside. If my master heard me talking to you as I am now, I should soon have notice to quit—that is, just so soon as he could get someone else, perhaps a half gypo, or a lad, to take my place. You don't build any new cottages with your Acts—that's the trouble. You only closes them. What is the good of the Parish Council to us when all the power is left in the hands of the rural District Councillors? And who are they? Why, the farmers who employ us. Even if we could afford to take a day off to serve once a fortnight, do you think we should get any work in the neighbourhood afterwards if we stood up against the likes of them? Why, we are like Robin Hood—outcasts, that's what we are; outcasts in our own country. The school officer comes to hunt up *our* children; the sanitary inspector noses into *our* gardens, so that we can't keep a pig even. Your Public Health Act may be good, but it costs us money. When we want clean water to drink, it's another threepence a week; and now there will be another three or four pence a week for insurance. Mr. Lloyd George means very well, I believe, but he don't understand what threepence or fourpence a week means when 15*s.* a week is not nearly enough to live upon. Mr. John Burns don't understand about housing in the country, that's certain, or he would not expect us to fill up forms we don't understand and then ask us to make out a case. Why, I'm told University men don't know how to fill up a form what they call Four. As to small holdings—well, I did apply for one, but I saw how annoyed my master was about it, and they were so long in finding the land that I drew back. I'm not sorry I did, as I haven't the money to work it. The Government don't seem to understand that taking a small holding is like taking a shop. You've got to stock it after you can see the rent. I say again that we ain't any better off, those of us who are poor. It comes every year harder to make both ends meet. But I tell you what this educa-

tion *has* done: it has made the likes of us *less contented with our poverty than our fathers were*."

It is true enough, I think, that nearly every "rural reform," with the exception of the Old Age Pension Act, has been costly to the agricultural labourer. The Enclosure Acts squeezed him out of his land. The Public Health Act has squeezed the pig out of his garden pigsty. The Town Planning Act has squeezed him out of 13,000 cottages, and found him only 116 new ones instead. The Insurance Act has docked him of a loaf of bread every week. Bacon trusts, cotton syndicates, and coal combines have shorn him of food, raiment, and fuel.

It is always a difficult matter to make the prosperous English townsman realise the helplessness of Hodge. The foreigner, the German or Frenchman, coming from countries where the peasant is not a proletarian, grasps the situation far more readily when making a study of English rural life. In some respects the English country labourer of to-day is less able to stand up for his "rights" than was the French peasant before the French Revolution. This may sound an extreme statement, but let me quote from J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond's illuminating book, *The Village Labourer*:—

"The French peasant may be overwhelmed by the dime, the taille, the corvée, the hundred and one services that knit his tenure to the caprices of a lord; he may be wretched, brutal, ignorant, ill-clothed, ill-fed, ill-housed; but he has not lost his status, he is not a casual figure in a drifting proletariat; he belongs to a community that can withstand the lord: dispute his claims at law: resume his rights, recover his possessions, and establish one day his independence."

Ce seigneur litige avec ses vassaux, common enough then in France, cannot be written of the English peasant even a hundred and twenty years after the French Revolution! Whoever heard of a country lawyer who would risk ruining his practice amongst the propertied class by championing the claims of a drifting proletariat?

Possibly the most pitiful thing about the social life of rural England is the cowardice of the professional classes; and it is not only the lawyer who exhibits a cowardice which many a town mechanic would scorn to show. Though

the doctor knows perfectly well the insanitary condition in which the labourer lives, he remains discreetly silent. His children, like those of the parson, must go to a public school; and how are the bills to be paid if a boycott of the possessing class were to be instituted against him?

It took me and another man (who has now been made a J.P.) exactly five years to have a National school made sanitary. Against us were ranged all the school managers, including the vicar, the drains of whose house ran into an open ditch under the windows of the school. Only one parent dared to come forward to give evidence as to the diphtheritic throats constantly recurring, and he was the coachman of my friend! Finally, it was only when the Board of Education threatened to close the school altogether that the managers decided to put in a drain and fill up the ditch.

In spite, however, of the large number of parsons who side with the possessing class, and do so often quite unconsciously—it being a matter of tradition assimilated with the public school accent—there are others, and an increasing number, I am glad to say, who realise that their Leader was a carpenter, and one who spent His life championing the poor and the oppressed. There is, for instance, the Rector of Tockenham, Wilts; and the very fact that he brought up two men from one village who had given evidence at a Local Government Board Enquiry in the face of the opposition of the local farmers and the agent of a great landowner, the fact that these men were shown before an audience in Caxton Hall last March as exceptionally brave men, is surely indicative that tyranny is rife in our countryside. It is quite possible that the courage of two of these men who had been evicted in a snowstorm would not have had the necessary staying qualities had they not been backed up by the National Land and Home League, of which Lord Henry Bentinck is the president.*

The squire, or principal landowner, is often unnecessarily held in dread by the labourer, for the squire, with the increasing use of motors, is now often merely a bird

* The League with the help of 6 village Hampdens has just won (July) a notable housing victory at Potterne: a labourer's battle won though at the usual cost of the victimisation of the local reformers.

of passage on his country estate. Most of his time is probably spent in a large town or abroad. England to him is a vast shooting preserve, and he is not concerned as to whether Hodge sits on the Parish or the Rural District Council—though he might look askance at him should he ever meet him on the County Council. Hodge is too far off to trouble a squire whose business lies with the farmers, and in them the squire is little interested save as rent-payers and as tenants who will not bother him about the number of game kept in the woods. The tyranny of the squire over the labourer is not personal, like that of the farmer. The countryside must, of course, be kept open for birds, and the population kept in check, or sport might be ruined and the Empire endangered. The economic screw that the squire turns on the labourer is not to squeeze more rent out of his bones, as Cobbett would say, but to keep his class from swarming over the land.

On a recent motor tour a friend took me into Suffolk. It was appalling to notice the amount of land being badly farmed. Here and there between the huge partridge drives girdled by woods lay forlorn villages with an apologetic air, striving to efface their existence by decay. Some of the cottages bore the appearance of hulks, with their ribs lying exposed to wind and weather. The only sign of intensive culture discernible from Bishop's Stortford to Newmarket was on the dining-room table of the "Rutland Arms," where wheat was growing in pots as a cultural curiosity!

In one village—I won't mention the name—I found the housing conditions, as a resident there declared, "worse than a London slum." The land is owned by a peer of the realm, and there is practically but one employer, and he a large farmer. With the farm are let a good many cottages in the village. In one of these two parents and six children occupy the single bedroom and the landing on the top of the stairs. Rafters as bare as a bone and chimneys tumbling down presented a tragic sight. An old resident informed me that one poor street in Upper Norwood was said to be peopled by immigrants from this village. With low wages, decaying cottages, and no land for them to till free of thraldom, the young had left as though a plague had devastated the village.

Two or three men had applied for small holdings two years ago, but nothing came of it. One of these had quickly to seek work in the next parish after he had sent in his application.

Whilst political intimidation is sporadic, breaking out acutely every five or six years, the tyranny exercised by the farming class over the labourer is an excoriation that knows no limit. The large farmer is not only on the Parish Council, but is invariably to be found on the Rural District Council, and very often on the County Council. His dog-in-the-manger policy to prevent labourers from having access to the land is one that is not only detrimental to the labourer, but to all of us as Englishmen, for it leads to bad tillage. He is not concerned with making the land yield more when he adds field to field, but only to increase his gross income and his control over the lives of others.

When I was elected on to a Parish Council in a certain Surrey village, it was only at night that I could visit the cottages of the poor in order to examine the water supply, which was generally a stagnant pool. I did not wish to expose the tenants to the sight of the farmer-landlord when showing me the water that their children had to drink. Ranged against me on the Council were the three local farmers, their relatives, and their medical attendant. This group occupied not only all the farms in the parish, but also owned the local waterworks, the local gasworks, the mill, the butcher's shop, and most of the insanitary cottages. To this reigning family of farmers the labourers had to come for their daily work, their bread, their meat, their drink, and their lodging. Their tyrannical domination over the village was almost as complete as that portrayed by Balzac when writing of the *bourgeoisie* in France after the Revolution. The head of this reigning family of farmers was chairman of the Rural District Council, so that should anything pass a too progressive Parish Council, it could be effectually blocked by the rural House of Lords. Again, in the recent housing scandal in Foxham, in Wiltshire, it was the seven farmers against two labourers on the Parish Council who declared in the face of impending evictions that no cottages were needed!

It is not only the man who has to suffer. The territorial domination by one individual sometimes strikes hard

those least able to resist a blow. I know of one Lady of the Manor who has given orders to her steward that no girl who "has got into trouble" shall be allowed cottage-room on her estate. In quite a different county a pathetic appeal was made to me by a cowman who had been given notice to quit because his eldest, unmarried daughter, aged nineteen, was *enceinte*. He had pleaded in vain to be allowed to remain, as his wife was about to give birth to another child. Needless to say, the cottage was overcrowded.

To bring about a revival of English country life two things must be done: (1) Cottages must be built and owned by public authorities, and (2) labourers must be given access to the land and equipped to make use of it. It is a national scandal that, while the poor land of Belgium produces £20 an acre, the fertile land of England produces only £4 an acre.

The opposition to building more cottages for labourers has been maintained by farmers (who dominate the Rural District Council) for two reasons: one, because labourers would be more "independent," and the other because in the heart of many counties where wages are low, such as Wilts, Suffolk, Gloucester, Hants, Sussex, Oxford, Berkshire, and Norfolk, it is almost impossible to build cottages and let them without making a charge on the rates.

It is clear that our Housing Acts have failed. In my opinion, one of two courses must be taken, and there is no reason why both should not be pursued. We can carry out the housing policy, which has been so successful in Ireland, in erecting cottages subsidised by State and county, and let at an uneconomic rent; or we can institute a legal minimum wage.

The former policy has already been outlined in Sir Arthur Boscawen's Bill, which passed the Second Reading in the House of Commons in March. An excellent feature of this Bill was the appointment of Housing Commissioners* who should become the driving force behind the recalcitrant Rural District Councils in the same manner as the Small Holding Commissioners became (eventually!)

* Since its introduction the Bill has been emasculated in Committee. Mr. John Burns has insisted upon the Housing Commissioners being cut out. If they walk into his office, he has declared, he will walk out. Perhaps, after all, the nation could dispense with one bureaucrat rather than with its peasants.

the driving force behind the recalcitrant County Councils. We have at last realised that the problem of rural housing is too grave a problem to be strangled by petty parochialism.

The other way out of the difficulty is to range agricultural labour under the Sweated Industries. This could easily be done without further statutory powers by incorporating it under the Trades Board Act, 1909. There is no valid economic reason why the farmer of the poor hillside farms of Derbyshire and Northumberland should pay £1 a week to labourers, whilst the farmers of the fertile lands of Norfolk and Suffolk should be paying only 12*s.* a week. The difference in wages is entirely due to the proximity to mines and other industrial centres, and not to economic advantages. Mr. Bonar Law has already declared that agricultural labourers should receive higher wages. Here, then, is the chance for the Conservative party to strive with Sir A. Boscawen and Mr. Bathurst in their Housing Reform Bill to do something which the Liberal party hitherto has failed to accomplish.

Both political parties are now committed to a Small Holdings policy. But something much more drastic than giving access to the land to a few thousand out of our largest industrial class is needed. Land has hitherto been bought at too high a price by County Councillors, thus burdening the tenants with excessive rents. Then the labourer has had to find capital or to be cast aside as a rejected applicant. The valuation of farm lands should be taken not on the advice of valuers who are professionally interested in keeping up the price of land, but on the fair computation of basing the capital value on twenty years' purchase of the average rental the last five years, and on both land and houses the sinking fund charge which it has been the habit to make tenants pay, should in justice be paid by the owners, who are in every case the County Council. It is futile to say to Hodge, shorn of all the means of production but a spade: "We have given you the land. Cultivate it and be happy." He can neither cultivate it nor be happy until he has the opportunity to borrow money on the same terms as the peasants of Mayo, or those of Belgium, Germany, Denmark, or France, who are his competitors in the markets of the world.

If reform does not come quickly to repeople our empty

countryside, either we shall lose our bold peasantry altogether, and with it our virility as a race, or a swift retribution will overtake the governing classes. "We steal the goose and give back the giblets," said a landowner to Thelwall, when commons were being enclosed. "No," came the retort, "giblets are much too dainty for the common herd; we give them only the pen-feathers." It may be that a "drifting proletariat" will seize these pen-feathers, and with them write the laws by which rural England shall in future be governed!

Play of the Month

Mlle. Gaby Deslys and — Gordon Craig

WITHOUT doubt, the palm of the autumn theatrical season goes to France, and history repeats itself. Like her ancestral archers, who on a memorable battlefield turned their backs upon the English and bade them "shoot the first," so it is to Mlle. Gaby Deslys that the moral victory must be given; who, with her *chien* and frolics, her "bloomers" and undressing act, has conquered London, above splendiferous *Drake* and *The Everywoman* of Mr. H. B. Irving, above *The Voysey Inheritance*, and even the various "Girls" of the George Edwardes, Klaw-Erlanger "presented" productions, as, pointing upwards, articulate if underground, like the very Ghost of Hamlet, the little exhibition of Gordon Craig's designs at the Leicester Galleries stands out as its polarity in popularity and—art.

The Gaby Deslys show at the Palace is what the public might call a "conducive" one. I can remember nothing like the enthusiasm or interest since the Tar-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay of Lottie Collins, which was, of course, nothing more than an English version of "La Goulue's" high-kicking can-can of the old Moulin Rouge quadrilles. The excitement about Mlle. Gaby Deslys is somewhat difficult to understand, unless as a public expression of astonishment at the whimsicality of our double censorship, which in this case has certainly got its laugh back on the detractors of "Dear Old Charlie." As a dancer, this French artiste (they like to have an "e" on the Halls, *e.g.*, Marie for Mary, etc.) is negligible, except in a clownish, acrobatic way. She wears sensational frocks, it is true, and still more sensationally unfrocks herself. But even this exposition of French "bloomers" and underlinen is not very naughty—it can be seen any day in the shops and advertisements—if regarded *untheatrically*. When I asked the married man I

went to the Palace with to explain his absorption in the *pimpantes* corybantics of Mlle. Deslys when his own wife was so far more graceful, young, sweet and pretty, with such far prettier ankles, shoulders, arms and contours, he did look a little embarrassed for a moment. "It is queer," he said. "I never look to see what bloomers my wife has on. I suppose it's the glamour of the stage that does it. But there is something about Gaby, you know, isn't there?"

And there my friend spoke the truth. Mlle. Gaby knows it. The astute manager of the Palace knows it. The public know it when they get it. "It's an indescribable something" that gets over the footlights. It was the quality of Irving. Grasso has any amount of it. Ellen Terry had it. Mrs. Patrick Campbell can present it—when she pleases. And so Mlle. Gaby, without pretentions or qualities, has the triumph of a Maud Allen. And married men, and the "bhoys," and callow lads in the sequacious company of the other sex flock to see a little French music hall dancer, *très connue*, who has been on the stage a very long time, take off as much of her clothing as the British censors will allow her—that harlequinade of an office which prohibited *Waste* and has just censored (frozen out is the new way) a remarkable little one-act play by Miss Gwen John.

Now the Empress Theodora did the thing properly, *coram populo* (see Gibbon and his Latin notes). There was some emotional excuse for the gladiatorial Roman public. But there is little for the cold-blooded Britisher who delights in a spate of bedroom suggestiveness unrelieved by all emotion or æstheticism. The performance is really shockingly undisturbing—*troublant* is the word in place. That it pleases may be a sign of the times, a sign that in our Peter Pan collars we are growing up to be an adult public with a critical faculty; but it is a terrible condemnation of the Lord Chamberlain. It brands that office as a practical joker. The play of Monna Vanna was stopped because that most virtuous woman was supposed to have nothing on under her cloak, though she appeared in a mantle which revealed actually far less of her person than the *décolletage* of any English girl in a ball-room; yet Mlle. Gaby is allowed to dance about, flaunt, and powder-puff infinitely more of her legs and torso, measured by the tape, than

the censor compels her to drape in the "duckiest" of Parisian *lingerie*. It really isn't "cricket." It's not fair on Granville Barker. It's not altogether fair on the public, who would like to see even more of Mlle. Gaby's charms. And if the men had only half the courage of the super-militant Suffragettes, they would collectively refuse to eat until the Castor and Pollux of the Lord Chamberlain's office enabled Mlle. Gaby to display as much skin and bone as the public did want to see, and she, herself, was willing to exhibit. Nothing succeeds like excess. I think Mlle. Gaby has a good case to write to *The Times* about, which possibly, now that it has a new editor, might comply with a leader. I would support Mr. Seymour Hicks it he would take the matter up, for he had to clothe his "Bath Bun" ladies. This favouritism of the foreigner is not right. I know plenty of aspiring English girls who would gladly compete with the wee stage effects and properties of Mlle. Gaby Deslys—six-footers, too, so that there would be more to bulk in the mind's eye. I am against Protection in any form. But what is the use of singing "Britons never, never shall be," if we are the slaves of such a Censor and such an exhibition?

And now, "out of the shot and danger of desire," let me turn to Gordon Craig's designs for Hamlet as played at the Moscow Art Theatre. Here in the calm and beauty of simplicity these little models show us how the stage ought to be decorated and lighted, and what wonderful effects can be produced by a few screens, an intelligent plan of lighting, and a mind which in its way is a genius. Nothing can render the grandeur, the awe, the dignity, the majesty of Hamlet more suggestively, more delicately than these designs of Craig's, which, like all beautiful things, are extraordinarily simple and natural. The man himself is described as unpractical. Nothing can be more practical or more cheap than these models, and yet they are astonishingly beautiful. A beautiful thing (writes Gordon Craig) is "that which is calm, clear, living, quiet, strong, symmetric, simple, strange, yet familiar—both old and new."

His whole method is re-creation—not creation or presentation—the exact opposite, in fact, to the photographic "realism" of the modern theatre. It is the question of find-

ing the true form of things and ideals, for to give a new form to that which already has a form of its own is wrong and foolish. These designs reflect a spirit of calm and solemnity. They blend the literary with the æsthetic sense. We get truly idea, illusion, above all an atmosphere in harmony with the design of the play.

Seeing them, it is impossible to doubt that the time is not soon coming when Gordon Craig will be publicly accepted as the true reformer of scenic expression. He aims at a real theatrical art. The monstrous thing is that no English theatre is thrown open to his genius. What he has to give is real and cheap and most practical. Nor will anyone deny the intrinsic beauty of his ideas.

With the epidermic attractions of Mlle. Deslys before us, it is perhaps too much to expect the British public to pay heed to Craig's æstheticism, and so for the time being he is working in Paris, where an English artist is often far better appreciated.

S. O.

Books of the Month

BIOGRAPHY

THIRTEEN YEARS OF A BUSY WOMAN'S LIFE. By MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE. (John Lane.)

Mrs. "Alec" is a well-known figure in London, but few people realise how seriously she had to work for a living, to support not only a home but the education of two sons; how very gallantly, in short, she has battled with the grim hardships of life, which fell upon her, all on a day, and left her a penniless widow. This book, brimful of stories, anecdotes, autobiographical sketches, and nugæ, both of Bohemia and the drawing-room, reveals the sort of woman that she is. Her style indeed proves this, characterised by a staccato, virile directness and intensity, which compels, if it lacks somewhat in the musical quantities of nexus and rhythm. The style is the woman—strong, true, brave, like a soldier. And in its way this work is an autobiography far more interesting and revelatory than most of the elaborate biographies and autobiographies put upon the market, quite extraordinarily naïve in some respects, so frank that it reads like intimate conversation, so honestly egotistical that the critic is at once confounded and disarmed. Mrs. Tweedie has been a great woman traveller. She is a wonderful organiser; she has many friends, and she has fought the battle of life with a splendid courage. In this book she jars occasionally upon the suave reviewer. But it should be borne in mind that the author only took to journalism and letters as a means of livelihood. And she is as frank about it as she is about herself. In her own way—a rather curious mixture of journalistic pithiness, apophthegm, paradox, sentimentality, homily, and common-sense—she reveals herself at the end as "quite well again." The epilogue is not an ending, it is "au revoir." She has not finished with the world yet. We rejoice. We feel that she has much to accomplish yet in life—this restless activity of hers is the secret of her youth and charm—and that we shall meet again. Well may the critic say to her in the Spanish that she knows well: "I kiss your hand, dear lady. Go on and give us more."

CRITICAL

THE POET'S CHANTRY. By KATHERINE BRÉGY. Herbert and Daniel. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Miss Brégy has written a book of essays on Catholic poets, such as Robert Southwell, Crashaw, Coventry Patmore, and Francis Thompson. Apart from a certain special pleading for the mystical point of view—which, of course, requires none—her book gives a just estimate of the poets treated. Robert Southwell (1561–1595) stands out as quite a heroic figure, simple and passionate in his life of pain and torture, yet curiously involved and artificial in his verse. Southwell was a better priest than he was poet, and his prayer before the scaffold has a sincerity he never reached in his interesting but entangled verses. William Habington, the author of "Castara," is a lovable character, and his songs to Lucy Herbert have something of Spenser's grace and recall Daniel's famous "Delia" sequence. Aubrey de Vere, Father Gerard Hopkins, Lionel Johnson, and Mrs. Meynell make up the other poets with whom the volume deals, and Miss Brégy demonstrates their excellences and hints

at their shortcomings with the assurance and ease of well-acquainted criticism. It may be long before Catholic mysticism will find a greater singer than Francis Thompson, whose fervour, equally with St. Teresa's, moves not only the hearts of the faithful, but awakes sympathy in the most pagan breasts. Mrs. Meynell, the most classical and least sentimental of English women poets, is treated by the author with grace and justice. The "Chantry" makes a convenient and well-planned little volume, but the author might have given herself the trouble to append dates to the bibliographical references at the end.

DRAMA

MORITURI, THREE ONE-ACT PLAYS. By HERMANN SUDERMANN. Translated by Archibald Alexander. ROSES, FOUR ONE-ACT PLAYS. By HERMANN SUDERMANN. Translated by Grace Frank. Duckworth and Co. 2s. net each.

These two volumes (the originals of which are respectively fifteen and ten years old) present favourable specimens of the work of that popular German author, whose mentality is a piquant blend of Ibsen and *The Family Herald*. *Morituri*, for instance, contains the minimum of that spurious sentiment and pseudo-pathos which constitute the distinguishing features of Sudermann, and the maximum of his adroitness in the successful manipulation of the theatrical mechanism. *Teja* deals in poetical prose with the heroic death of the last of the Goths. Beleaguered by his enemies, he weds a wife, feasts on two crusts of bread and a little milk, and sallies forth against the enemy at the head of his warriors. The trumpet of courage is successfully blown in every key to slow music, and the piece, while, of course, puerile when compared to *Monna Vanna* or *Salomé*, is by no means ineffective. Far more impressive is *Fritzchen*. A retired officer has advised his subaltern son to obtain practical experience of women before settling down to domestic bliss. The son thereupon has, with somewhat excessive dutifulness, become involved with the wife of a man who is a dead sport. He comes home to take leave of father, mother, and *fiancée*, and every drop of sentiment, true and false, is successfully squeezed out of the tragic scene. More delicate and less banal is the *Eternal Masculine*, where the Watteau-like atmosphere of a fantastic court, give full scope to those artificial poses and temperamental tropes in which Sudermann so pre-eminently excels.

Roses, which has in turn an aphrodisiacal and sentimental connotation, deals with four variations of the erotic *motif*. *Streaks of Light* describes the murder in an octagonal pavilion of "a beautiful woman about twenty-five years of age, intractable and passionate, with traces of a *bourgeois* desire to be romantic," by her righteously indignant husband, while *The Far-away Princess* is a romantic trifle masquerading under the name of one of Rostand's best plays. *The Last Visit* has traces of tragic irony. An Unknown Lady comes to the rooms of a dead officer (who has purchased, retrospectively, her graces from her husband at the price of his life) to place a wreath on his coffin and recover her letters. It transpires that on the eve of his death the officer had married Daisy ("her bearing pure and proud"), the daughter of his horse-trainer, who used to open the door on the occasion of the assignations. *Margot* is a variant on the Doll's House theme. A lawyer of forty proposes marriage to the seduced daughter of one of his clients. In order to vindicate her self-respect she announces her intention of first earning her own living, so so that "she can come with a free step and be able to look every man in the face."

Both the translators are equally accomplished in that dialect of Germenglish flavoured with American, into which the original is rendered. We may mention such phrases as "The key to the icehouse," "Thought to overtake him," "That you will have remembered even in your boozi-

ness," "See here, dearie," "Inestimable pulcritude," "I am almost thirty, and the matron has to go to the rear."

The melodrama of Sudermann, where all the characters wear their souls upon their sleeves and carry their temperaments in their pockets should do well in this country.

PERSE PLAYBOOKS. No. 1: Dramatic Work by the Boys of the Perse School, Cambridge. Cambridge: Heffer and Sons, 1912. 1s. net.

"Three centuries of boyish silence must now be answered," says a foreword. And, indeed, who shall say how many playwrights and actors have been lost to the world since the post-Shakespearean eclipse of boy-players? But the innovation has a wider scope. Although merely tentative, it is symptomatic of a revulsion of feeling on the part of certain educationists; it is a phenomenon, big with possibilities.

The old system has been found wanting—the system of those who evolved an imaginary type of boyhood out of their inner consciousness and strenuously worked to shape the raw material in accordance with their theory. What was the result? A bookish marionette at best, or a well-groomed young savage, hiding his awkwardness under a mask of "good form." It is time we revised our notions and convinced ourselves that the aim of education is to educe: to educe, among other things, certain qualities of ingenuous youth which have too often been allowed to slumber or become atrophied. Not repression, but expression—such is the modern formula.

So the principle underlying this movement is thoroughly sound; it strives to bring the boys in touch with actualities, reviving those notions of the old Greeks and Elizabethans who held that all life is a game to be learnt playing—according to the rules. The Perse scholars write and act their own plays. There is not the slightest doubt that such an exercise widens their horizon (and what is rational education but an opening-up of new horizons?) and stimulates their faculty of self-control, laying the foundations of that *function of the real* without which the so-called "civic virtues" are an empty name.

We shall be interested to read the second instalment, which is promised for October or thereabouts. Here, meanwhile, is a charming little tableau of the year 1660 called *The Cottage on the Moor,* followed by *Thor's Hammer*—a comedy wherein the youngsters (their average age is 12½) have fashioned the legend of Thrym and the old Thunder-god into naïvely convincing verse.

N. D.

FICTION

MARRIAGE. By H. G. WELLS. Macmillan. 6s.

When Mr. Wells had written and published "The New Machiavelli" the general attitude towards him was—"What can Mr. Wells do next? He has given us his constructive and destructive philosophy; he has been through the stages of his "fantastic romances," of his "books upon social and political questions," of the novels in which draper's assistants and adventurous reformers ran through the gamut of emotions amid the changing and dissolving fabric of English life. He has ended in anarchy. He has shown us the private affections at war with public duty, and public duty as an enemy to private aspiration. He has arrived, after half a lifetime of thought and effort, at a brilliant and desperate chaos. That is the end—the vigour of a death-agony."

But it was not the end. It is as if this convulsive experience of his had been no more than preparation for the fray of creative authorship. He is addressing himself again to the largest problems of life in a new manner, from a new angle, with a more penetrating philosophy, and a greater intensity of human feeling. He is addressing himself to the very largest problem, that of the purpose and ideals of the human race, and he is unfolding this vast subject through the individual lives of a man

and a woman. It is a sufficient task for the philosopher to pursue this question of the human ideal with logical coherence and relevance; it is hard enough for a novelist to steer his characters through a long and intricate plot. It is doubtful if any living Englishman except Mr. Wells could have successfully combined both tasks, and made the affairs of a few men and women thus representative of the permanent, cosmic problem. His aim is as large as that which Goethe set himself in *Faust*. Though he entirely lacks the perfected form, the precision, the economy of the great philosopher-poet, he has nevertheless struggled brilliantly through the maze of modern life, dropping none of the impedimenta by the way—the little ludicrous things, the meannesses, the things that make humour, malice, bitterness, as well as aspiration. In spite of, or perhaps by means of, the motley array of his material, he has touched and illuminated the central human issue.

As Mr. Wells is concerned with the complete adult careers of a man and a woman, the working out "of their destinies, not in relation to a single incident, but in relation to the whole of life the book is necessarily long—nor has the author ever practised economy in the matter of space. Needless to say, marriage is not the end; it is the real beginning of the book. The first two hundred pages serve merely to introduce us to Marjorie and to Trafford, and to bring about a marriage apparently made in heaven, a marriage which in the popular novels would mean happiness ever after. Marjorie escapes from her home and her father—a vain, opinionative, tyrannical, obtuse man. She escapes, also from a *fiancé*, and elopes with Trafford.

Here apparently we have supremely favourable circumstances for a happy marriage. Trafford is a man of intellect and imagination. He has before him a brilliant future in scientific research. He has no commonplace vices. He is devoted to his work and devoted to his wife. He is Mr. Wells's hero *par excellence*. Marjorie also is in love with her husband. She is clever in an indeterminate way, imaginative, fond of life and the glitter and adventure of life. She has the defects of a sensitive feminine temperament. It soon appears that she is beginning to be a demand on her husband. She has little sense of the relation of means to ends, and it is forced upon Trafford's notice that she is capable of debt—considerable debt. In making his little home beautiful for him she spends his capital. She introduces a motley collection of ambitious persons to his house. When he devotes himself eagerly to his researches she seems to think that he is grudging in his affection for her. She is not fitted for routine occupations, which others can do better and more economically. She cries out piteously to her husband, "But, look here, Rag—what on earth am I to *do*?" Trafford, eager for his scientific research, becomes conscious of a dilemma in his life, an "opposition between Marjorie and child and home on the one hand, and on the other this big, wider thing, this remoter, severer demand upon his being."

He surrenders the scientific ideal to the chivalric ideal, abandons his research in order to make Marjorie rich and to surround her with luxury, but at length rebels. The comfortable house, the artistic surroundings, the social pleasures and ennui of acquaintances revealed themselves to him in all their pettiness—frustrations of the life which man in his more glorious capacities seemed destined to live. He sees the impulses under which men and women seek to escape "from the petty, weakly stimulating, competitive motives of low-grade and law-abiding prosperity." Marjorie herself has become the feminine embodiment of that unjust life of "getting on," of just "doing," which seeks to trammel, stifle, and kill the spirit and higher intelligence of man. He resolves to fly to the wintry wilds of Labrador. Marjorie flies with him.

There, in the brilliantly described scene, amid the thrilling dangers of a wild solitude and a grim winter, they discover themselves. They come near to one another in moments of peril, deprivation, and self-sacrifice. He passionately asserts, she passionately agrees, that "we can't *do* things. We don't bring things off!" "The real thing is to get

knowledge, and express it." "This Being—opening its eyes, listening, trying to comprehend. Every good thing in man is that—looking and making pictures, listening and making songs, making philosophies and sciences, trying new powers, bridge and engine, spark and gun. At the bottom of my soul, *that*." He sees man without "eyes for those greater things, but we've got the promise—the intimation of yes."

It is impossible here to summarise the humorous-passionate conversations in which these first and last things are thought out and acted out between the man and woman in the wild—the man and woman, still comparatively young, about to return to a new life in civilisation. But what will they become when they return? What will Marjorie do when the shops once again lie temptingly before her, when Aunt Plessington's guests once more besiege her, and social life presents itself again in its garish variety? Is this visit to the wild more decisive than marriage itself? Will their brief vision of God, their intellectual and spiritual conversion, make them "live happily ever after"? Mr. Wells knows that it will not, and we are inclined to think that he will be bound to write another novel to show the final stage of Marjorie and Trafford, the renewed conflict, within them and between them, of the world and the spirit.

THE HAPPY FAMILY. By Frank Swinnerton. Methuen. 6*s*.

It is at least singular that each novelist that elects the photographic method of presenting his story should also elect that the sphere of life so photographed should be of a depressing nature. Everything in *The Happy Family* comes out right in the end. Each lassie wins the laddie she wished, however unaccountable her choice might seem to the cool observer. There is no tragedy anywhere. And yet, despite the kindly ordaining hand of Mr. Swinnerton, his book is more depressing than even the sternest tragedy is supposed to be by those who do not know that tragedy exalts. In real life one would undergo any protracted penance rather than endure the presence of such a family as the Amersons for an hour; and therefore, one asks, why should we be compelled to abide them in the pages of a novel of fair length?

The pity of it is that Mr. Swinnerton can write; and there are clear hints distributed throughout the book that he can also create. It is always a pity when a man who can create elects rather to compile with care. One can walk down any street in Kentish Town, the home of the Amersons, and pick out Mr. Amerson, Mrs. Amerson, Tom, Grace, Mabel, and Ted Amerson, with their respective and prospective wives and husbands; one may even, with rather more care, pick out Mary Amerson and Roger Bennett. Viola Bright is quite another matter. There Mr. Swinnerton is evolving a being from the creative processes of his own imagination. We feel quite glad that Viola does not win Roger in the end; Mary is a dear sweet thing, while Viola is rather an irresponsible and more than somewhat of a meretricious kind of being; Mary would make Roger an excellent wife, while Viola we are very sure would not; nevertheless, Viola, even because she obeys her own personal laws, is a deal more interesting than Mary, the sympathetic and kindly. Viola reveals new possibilities of our very human nature to us, whereas Mary is a type of person copied carefully from a certain stratum of suburban society; and that is all the difference between creation and compilation.

Yet, having copied, Mr. Swinnerton has copied well. Even in the long, rather wearying descriptions of streets, houses, and business affairs in a typical publisher's office (that most readers will probably hurry speedily over), this same meticulous care is shown. Everything is there as it really and truly occurs—which is rather a painful thing to believe. Nothing is omitted. There is no exaggeration; there is no withholding. In the descriptions of a publisher's office, for example, on which Mr. Swinnerton evidently prides himself, one may almost discover how to run a publishing house. Those who wish to know how certain portions of London are run, business and domestic, could not do better than consult *The Happy*

Family. But it all matters so little; and Mr. Swinnerton can, we are convinced, create for us some new features out of the eternal and perpetual stuff of life.

MRS. LANCELOT. A COMEDY OF ASSUMPTIONS. By MAURICE HEWLETT. Macmillan and Co. 6*s*.

That this book is Meredithian will be the cry of the critics, yet that hardly seems a correct epithet for a work which borrows the master's mannerisms without his unfailing sureness of insight. One is haunted by the idea that Mr. Hewlett himself is not impressed by the reality of his characters; he presents them with so much the air of a showman dandling his puppets, even using such phrases as "There's the tragi-comedy of Mrs. Lancelot, and I've set the stage." As for the chief persons in the play, they are four in number—Mrs. Lancelot herself, that "tender, conscientious, pale and slim woman"; her dry ambitious husband Charles, the most admirably presented of them all; the Duke, a mixture of Wellington and Palmerston, with a dash of originality cunningly blended; and, lastly, Gervase Poore, a "luscious and perfervid young poet," one of those high-handed, blustering heroes who Mr. Hewlett—and, oddly enough, his heroines—delight in. These characters are set ostensibly in the period of the first Reform Bill, but of actual background there is practically none, which method, while doing away with any atmosphere, yet produces a clear-cut, silhouette-like effect that is not without value. When Poore first knew Georgiana Lancelot—and at first his knowledge of her consisted of glimpses caught by haunting the doorways at which she entered—she was already, by the eyes of the world, taken for the Duke's mistress, though in truth she was nothing but his conscience, his Egeria. He, she, and Charles formed an innocent *ménage à Trois*, and Charles, poor, stiff, unlovable man, was somewhat to be pitied, for ambition—and, to do him justice, still more his admiration of, and belief in, the Duke—pulled him one way and his love for his wife, real enough, though it needed he should lose her before awaking to it, pulled him the other. To this household comes Gervase Poore, like a fireball, and the Duke, foreseeing the results for his Georgey, is capable enough of self-abnegation to help the affair onward. Eventually he takes the whole party—a humorous coach-load of which only he saw the joke—through France to Italy, where the inevitable at last happens, and Gervase sweeps the lady away. No modern writer has a purer or truer sense of romance than Mr. Hewlett, and he transports his readers with the lovers to their "vine-bright hills" above Rapallo, where Gervase "set up a school of love and taught her the mysteries of it," surrounding her "with all the wild observances which youth and genius ever pay to beauty and gentleness." The trouble is one has to take Mr. Hewlett's word for Poore's genius—and one has to take Mr. Hewlett's verses, attributed to Poore's pen, as evidences of it. Even this circumstance is not quite as destructive of the young man as the loud and windy tirade which he—turned preacher after the fatal habit of Mr. Hewlett's young men—fires at Charles when the latter is not only doing the "gentlemanly" thing in arranging to release Georgiana as soon as possible, but is even doing it with a touch of feeling and dignity. It goes without saying that there are many excellences in this book—vivid beauties of phrase and sharp characterisations—but it is the soul of the thing that seems uncertain of itself, and which will, until Mr. Hewlett, in his character of showman, pervades the stage less insistently.

YONDER. By E. H. YOUNG. W. Heinemann. 6*s*.

OF late years there has been a "boom," so to speak, in literature dealing with the land. We have read of the influences of earth until those of us who are genuine country folks have sickened at the words, seeing a holy thing mis-used. In "Yonder" the chief theme is the relationship of the characters to the Northern environment of fells and moors, and so delicately and surely is it done, so intimate is the revelation,

that never once is the charm of it tinged with mere belle-lettrist trickery. The author moves sure-footed among the pitfalls of over-strained sentiment and grandiloquence so many writers have fallen into when dealing with kindred themes, and part of her success is doubtless due to the fact that the whole atmosphere of the book is curiously remote from real life. This is not to say it is untrue to life, for it has verity, which is as high above veracity as truth is above facts. It is a little world to itself, one of those little worlds created by a certain point of view looking through a certain temperament, and in it everything bears a just relation, nothing is out of key. However, the mere story matters little; the fact that Alexander's father shoots Theresa and then commits suicide does not seem melodramatic, partly because of the remoteness of the book and of the feeling that nothing can part Alexander and Theresa, but even more because the quality of inner vision to which Miss Young gives expression so well, shows the relative unimportance, compared with itself, of mere events. But the chief thing about this book is its deep sense of beauty, which makes it a book not only to be read once, but to be kept for re-reading in the near future.

THE TURNSTILE. By A. E W. Mason. Hodder and Stoughton. 6*s*.

H. G. Wells has done the Parliamentary life pretty well, Belloc has satirised it, and now there trips Mr. Mason through the turnstile with one of his popular novels that people find so cheery. And cheery it is, readable, glib, and entertaining enough on a railway journey or on a wet afternoon in a country house. Not much more need be said. It makes no pretensions to literature. It reveals nothing. It just flows on and amuses. Every now and then the author displays a natural gift of observation; and he is quite irreproachable from the library censor side. All mammas can trust their girls with a book of Mr. Mason. The story is always so pleasant and pretty, you know! But when he was in Parliament Mr. Mason wrote better books than this. Let us hope the toll of *The Turnstile* will not prove unlucky.

CAVIARE. By GRANT RICHARDS. Grant Richards, Ltd. 6*s*.

The title of Mr. Grant Richards's novel suggests an esoteric piece of preciosity that would appeal to, shall we say, as many poets as could walk abreast down the pavement of Heddon Street. But it is, as a matter of fact, a pleasant modern romance of the idle people who dine equally well in London, Paris, and Monte Carlo, and even in New York. The life of these happy wanderers is a matter of intense interest to the general, as the halfpenny papers prove. So there is no reason why *Caviare*, pleasantly written as it is, should not be read in every house from here to Tooting. But, indeed, its remarkable popularity will astonish the bibliographers of the future; for in a copy received on the morning of Tuesday, September 3, they will find a note to the effect that it was "*First Printed, September*, 1912. *Reprinted, September*, 1912. *Reprinted (again), September*, 1912." The printers are to be congratulated.

The book is a charming modern fairy tale; the story that of the younger son whose kindness to a damsel in distress is rewarded not only by the hand and heart of a princess of Wall Street, but also by a miraculous speculation, which was particularly fortunate, because the princess's father in the course of these adventures lost all his kingdom, and was not therefore in a position to bestow half of it on the amiable Charles. Incidentally, one may enjoy the amiable Charles's exploits at Monte Carlo, without, of course, expecting to repeat it, any more than one expects after reading Grimm, even if one be a younger son, to be able to scale a mountain of glass with the aid of three needles. The exclusiveness suggested by the title is to be found only in the amiable Charles's taste in painting, which is as exquisite as that of Mr. Grant Richards in book production. Author and publisher are each to be congratulated on the other.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

HISTORICAL

THE STRANGLING OF PERSIA. By W. MORGAN SCHUSTER. Fisher Unwin. 12*s.* 6*d.* net.

The trouble about Mr. Schuster and Persia is at an end now, and it happened because Mr. Schuster was an honest man, who took his mission seriously. The game was this. England and Russia signed a convention guaranteeing the neutrality and integrity of Persia, Russia doing so with the secret intention to get as much of the country as she could. And Mr. Schuster, being an honest American, a hustler, evidently quite a type in his way, went to Persia with his party of financial advisers, thinking that the convention was honest, and set to work to straighten out the affairs of Persia—which was the one thing Russia was determined to prevent. Immediately the trouble began. The chapter describing his arrival in Teheran is delightful, and to anyone who knows diplomatic life, irresistibly droll. At our embassy, Sir George Barclay; at the Russian, M. Poklewski-Kozriell, who was till quite recently a well-known figure and ladies' man in London society. The question was: Who was to call first? For a month the matter engrossed the Persian Empire; but all humorists should read it. Then the "fun" began. Every move of Mr. Schuster was thwarted by Russia. There was the incident of Major Stokes. Finally, after eight months, there was his dismissal at the request of Russia—for the simple reason that Mr. Schuster looked like business, and Russian diplomacy aimed at keeping Persia in a chronic state of chaos and rebellion in order that step by step she should accomplish her task of peaceful penetration on the basis of law and order. This she has now done. She practically owns to-day the whole of North Persia, all the fat bits, the big towns, the chief agricultural districts, while we have earmarked a strategic portion in the south, which is mostly desert land. So much for the convention of 1907. This is an honest book by an honest man. It deserves public attention. But the supreme joke is the fact that it was an American who had to be turned out of Persia by England and Russia because he really was an honest man who tried to do something loyal and useful to strangled Persia.

LITERARY

THE THREE BRONTËS. By MAY SINCLAIR. Hutchinson and Co.

The Brontë problem threatens to develop into another case of Tichborne controversy, and will no doubt, despite this admirable critical analysis of Miss May Sinclair, continue to grow with the ages, though happily the Baconian test has not yet been applied to them. This work is not a criticism or biography; it is a critical repudiation of the Brontë case, as most recently stated; and in her task the author has been very successful. With Emily, especially, she positively triumphs, supported by the verdict of Maeterlinck. Emily is plainly May Sinclair's favourite sister—in weak Anne she is not so interested, with Charlotte she can still be critical, but to Emily she gives a heart which in some ways is quite Brontë-esque in the force and passion of its sincerity. The pother is complex. There is the scandal about the son; there is the question of Charlotte's "inspiration," the insinuation that is, of an affair with the Brussels professor; there is the question of the poems—Emily's poems; there is the problem of Wuthering Heights—whether Emily did write, could have written it; finally, there is the sex question of these ladies which still remains somewhat of a mystery, even now after the wholesome sifting of scoriæ accomplished by this book. Miss Sinclair restores our equilibrium, so to speak. She disposes summarily of the legend about the professor's affection for Charlotte. She rehabilitates Emily completely. This is the best part of her work. Her critical selection and appreciation of Emily's poetry does what other critics have apparently feared to do, lacking outside support. She shows us, convinces us, that Emily was what is called a

natural genius, evolving its own sources, creating, as it were, elementally; and that her effect upon Charlotte was decisive. This theory is very plausible and very likely correct. Perhaps Miss Sinclair ascribes too much "mysticism" to Emily, but we get a truly human picture of one of the most remarkable women in literature. Like all the author's work, the book is admirably written—written with sincerity and a blend of enthusiasm which never oversteps the norm of criticism, which in itself is a considerable achievement.

THE EQUINOX. Vol. I., No. 7. Wieland and Co. 10*s.* 6*d.*

The different items of this Review are very diverse in character. Mr. Crowley, if he is nothing else, is at least a one-man-band.

The first 100 pages are devoted to the Official Instructions of the A.·.A.·., which I will not even pretend to understand; but if *The Daily Mail* says truly, as it says emphatically, that the prose rises to the level of that of the prophets of the Old Testament, they should be well worth reading. The dramatic poem, "Adonis," contains some rather clever feats of rhyming, but the poetry of it is, to my mind, marred by persistent and somewhat feeble attempts at wit and satire.

The little play which follows is a cheerful story for children about a young lady who digs up an old gentleman to get his violin. This arouses the corpse, who proceeds to strangle her under romantic circumstances. It is hoped that this bright trifle will shortly enliven the gloom of the Grand Guignol. Another play, called *Snowstorm*, is also about a violin, or rather a violinist, who is thrown to the wolves by an injured wife, and goes blind. After various intrigues, the injured wife kills her husband by mistake, and the violinist, who wishes to make an assignation with him, plays only to his corpse.

In complete change from this old-fashioned Christmassy fare comes an article entitled "A Brief Abstract of the Symbolic Representation of the Universe Derived by Doctor John Dee through the Skrying of Sir Edward Kelly." Of this I can make neither head nor tail, especially as it is illustrated with ten plates even more totally mysterious than the text. The author apologises for omitting any account of the Tables of Soyga, Liber, Logaeth, the Heptarchia Mystica, and the Book of Enoch; but I really doubt whether even these would have made things quite clear. This work of Dee and Kelly is, however, one of the most interesting chapters in history. They worked together for many years, and elaborated the most complex and incomprehensible of all the magical systems. It is not at all clear how they did it, or why they did it; and it must be remembered that Dee was one of the first scholars in England. Their work is also interesting as the first and best account of a somewhat exalted form of dealings with alleged spirits. The re-publication and analysis of these manuscripts is a task which I strongly recommend to the S.P.R. There is nothing about a violin in this article; but after this we recur to the subject, and hardly ever leave it again, except in the most important of the contents of the volume, "The Temple of Solomon the King" (continued—it began in No. I.—and though not nearly finished, makes already about 1,000 pages!). This is really interesting as detailing the circumstances under which the mysterious Society of the A.·.A.·. manifested itself to Frater Perdurabo. A very strong case is certainly made out for the revelations; coincidence can hardly be stretched so far as to account for everything; and in the documents delivered there is certainly evidence of prophecy fulfilled in rather minute detail. In short, if miracles and prophecies were any evidence for a religion, one should find it difficult to overthrow this one. There is, in any case, at the very least, incontrovertible evidence of the workings of some supernormal intelligence possessing knowledge and power of a kind, not only of a degree, which is foreign to our experience of humanity.

Mr. Crowley is best in his cheerful attacks on Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. A. E. Waite. The latter article is one of the nastiest pieces of writing that I have seen for a long time. L. W.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PAPERS CRITICAL AND REMINISCENT. By William Sharp. Heinemann. 5*s.* net.

Appreciation is the very breath of Literature, for only by appreciation can understanding come. It is not always well, however, that that appreciation should be based on reminiscence. It is too apt to make the appreciation appear as though the scales had been weighted in its favour. And the various papers that constitute this book have this flavour about them very markedly. Apart from Mrs. Sharp's own declaration that the subjects of these essays were "all more or less his intimate friends," there is scarcely one of them in which the note of reminiscence does not somehow enter. In the essay on Thomas Hardy it enters by way of a detailed description of the novelist's house, and an explanation as to the occasion of its name; in the estimate of George Meredith's work it enters by the assurance that "any one who has the honour of knowing Meredith" will know how natural his phrasings are to him. Others, such as those on Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti (especially the latter), are purely reminiscent; and in them it is possible to catch private aspects of their subjects that throw rich sidelights on their work and their approach towards their art.

These papers cover a diversity of subjects, running through most of the later Victorian writers. Matthew Arnold and Robert Browning are praised with equal lack of reserve; also Thomas Hardy and Christina Rossetti. Yet in each his discrimination is wise, fastening, as it does, on just that element in each writer that gives him or her the distinction of greatness, and praising that. The only failure in this is in the essay on Thomas Hardy; and it arises from the fact that the essay was written before the appearance of *Jude the Obscure*. No estimate of Hardy can be complete or even adequate that has not before it in prominent attention the inwardness of that best of his books. And what is happiest among these sketches is probably a detailed examination of *Marius the Epicurean*, which is symptomatic of the scheme and scope of the book, since this was first printed as a review of Pater's book on its appearance. For most of these appreciations bear on them the mark of occasional work; and none of them, save that on Rossetti, throw much new light on their subjects. Yet they are valuable as the occasional expression of a man whose taste in literature was as catholic as it was subtle. And they are valuable, too, in a hypocritical day, as a further evidence of the fact that the only method of literary understanding is just appreciation.

LE GÉNIE LITTÉRAIRE. Par les Drs. A. Rémond et Paul Voivenet. (Librairie Félix Alcan.) 5 francs.

WHEN the man of science tells us that civilisation is a love-story, and that the passion for the preservation of the race is the force which drives the machinery of human life, the influence of the man of letters on the course of history does not enter into his reckoning. In this book that influence is brought into startling prominence, for the authors here demonstrate that the nerve-centres which direct literary activity work in very intimate connection with those which direct sexual activity. Indeed, they actually define language as a function of sex, with which they connect other forms of ability but remotely. It may very well be, therefore, that without the inspiration of the literary artist, the world would pay but little heed to what Disraeli called "sex things"; and the ugliest, but likewise the most beautiful, pages of its history would be blotted out. The sexual instincts are pre-eminently responsive to the appeals of suggestion, and perhaps it is mainly because "the poet," in the largest sense of the word, suggests that they should make love to one another, that men and women want to do so.

The book should not be read by those who think that science unweaves the spells with which poets have enchanted mankind. The keynote of the argument appears on page 96 in the form of a quotation from Dr. Voivenel's *Introduction to Pathological Psychology*: "Consciousness is a form of

pain." We learn here that it is only because the nerve-centres which control his work are, embryologically, very old, and, in his case, are so well organised as to function in the sub-conscious region of the mind, that the creative artist has the impression that someone other than himself has guided his pen. The ease and rapidity with which the man of genius works is not supernatural. It simply "represents a maximum in a regular curve."

MILITARY

PRIDE OF WAR. By GUSTAF JANSON. Sidgwick and Jackson. 6s.

The seven stories in this volume tell of the effects of the Turco-Italian war in Tripoli upon the half-starved peasants of the Italian army, the stoical Turks, and the bewildered Arabs, shocked into apathy by this sudden invasion of devils. The best of the stories is "The Anarchist," which shows how the printer Zirilli, who comes into the ranks red-hot with rage at his conscription, is gradually cowed by military discipline into renouncing even his anarchy; and, like one who puts his bread upon the waters, is rewarded after many days by being sent to Tripoli, where he finds the apotheosis of anarchy in war. The anarchy of his youth "battened in wild words in secret places and never went further than an outrage on single individuals. A fraud! Here was something different, something sublime! To seize a whole nation by the throat and conquer, kill, wipe them out!" Terrible figures pass through the pages: Captain Vitale, with his round, expressionless, shiny blue eyes and bristling moustache, one of those virile, unimaginative idiots who make war possible; Nino, the disfigured dandy; Rapagnotti, the hungry farmer, mad for loot. Yet these stories are not artistically successful. There are foggy pages which do not permit themselves to be read. "The Fantasia," for instance, requires superhuman perseverance. Yet its material, the story of how the son of a sheikh, who has seen his father and brother slain by Italian bullets, decides to sell the neutrality of his tribe to the Italians, so that it may husband its strength until Europe, rent asunder by war-madness, will fall an easy victim to the Moslem world, is fresh and interesting. But unreadability is the Nemesis of war fiction, although in Mr. Brailsford's incomparable and little-read novel, *The Broom of the War-God*, we had a great exception.

PHILOSOPHY

SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY. By EMILE BOUTROUX. English translation by JONATHAN NIELD. Duckworth. 5s. net.

At a time when almost every week brings us some new volume on the philosophy of Bergson—when that philosophy has become a fashion, and "creative evolution" a catchword of the hour—it is well to be reminded, as we are by the appearance of this able and substantial volume in an English dress, that Bergson is after all not the only living French philosopher with a claim to our attention. M. Boutroux, who holds the chair of modern philosophy in the University of Paris, presents us in these chapters with an admirably fair, lucid, and searching study of the great issue between science and religion, and examines its treatment at the hands of leading representatives both of the naturalistic and the spiritualistic tendencies. Thus Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity, Spencer's Doctrine of the Unknowable, Haeckel's materialistic Monism, the dualistic philosophy of Ritschl and his school, the Pragmatism of William James, are all passed under review by a writer who shows himself abundantly well equipped for his task alike of exposition and of criticism. But M. Boutroux is more than either the mere expositor or critic of the thought of others; and those curiously belated people who still imagine that "science has destroyed religion," on the grounds on

which Huxley attacked—and, as we think, successfully demolished—many traditional beliefs, will find in this sane and balanced work much food for reflection. The author's aim is to show that the postulates of life itself coincide with, and thus support, the principles of religion. He quotes with sympathy Pascal's memorable phrase, "Thou wouldst not seek me, if thou hadst not found me," and expresses the same idea by saying that "man's love for the ideal and perfect being that his reason anticipates is already a sense of union with that ideal." Science and religion, he concludes, each autonomous, and both of them tempered by strife, will combine to give us "a form of life ever ampler, richer, deeper, freer, as well as more beautiful and more intelligible." Of Mr. Nield's translation it is a pleasure to speak in terms of warmest praise.

POETRY

THE VIGIL OF VENUS AND OTHER POEMS. By "Q." Methuen. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

Sir Arthur Quiller Couch's rendering of the "Pervigilium Veneris," a Latin form written by an unknown author in the late period of the Roman Empire, is an interesting exercise in verse translation. It is interesting because it shows how a form of this period can be made to lend itself to the sensuous modern style which we associate particularly with the name of Swinburne. "Q's" translation is very free; it is rather a paraphrase than a translation, and he gives himself the utmost freedom in sensuous imagery, metaphor, and figure. Still, it must be said that the atmosphere he has infused into the poem is not alien to the original; it is only exaggerated, more highly flavoured, creating the sense of abandonment, not by neat epithets, but by the luscious rhythms of long, sounding lines.

We prefer the lyrical poems, the songs and ballads, which are more natural to Sir Arthur's talent, of which he has here given us some highly pleasing examples. The poem "Of Three Children Choosing a Chaplet of Verse" has a charm of perfect simplicity and musical quality quite rare in modern poetry. The reflective poem about Oxford is in quite another vein, but equally delightful. In these and most of his lyrical poems he writes without the appearance of effort or artifice, in the spontaneous manner essential to ballad and song.

THE KING. A Tragedy in a Continuous Series of Scenes. By STEPHEN PHILLIPS. Stephen Swift and Co. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE SHADOW GARDEN AND OTHER PLAYS. By MADISON CAWEIN. G. P. Putman's Sons. 1910.

NEW POEMS. By MADISON CAWEIN, author of *Kentucky Poems*. Grant Richards. 1909. 5*s.* net.

VALE. A Book of Verse. By LEONARD INKSTER. Fifield. 1*s.* net.

SILHOUETTES IN SONG. By PHILIP HENRY FISH. Routledge. 3*s.* net.

CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY. (Second Series.) By GORDON BOTTOMLEY. Elkin Mathews. 1*s.* net.

IMAGINARY SONNETS OF TASSO TO LEONORA. By ALICE LAW. Elkin Mathews. 1*s.* net.

SONGS OF THE OPEN AIR. By GEORGE A. GREENE. Elkin Mathews. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

SONGS OF THE BORDERLAND. By FREDERICK C. PALMER. Hexham: J. Catheral and Co.

One may well shudder at this "tragedy in a continuous series of scenes"—at this story of a wise and kindly ruler whose two children are

enmeshed, unbeknown to themselves, in the toils of a forbidden love. With the relentlessness of doom it moves onwards. The hand of fate has gripped fast the three unhappy victims of their unconsidered acts, and there is assuredly no lack of that Greek reticence and dignity which the author claims for his play; for the rest, one can hardly say, as he does, that it is built after the Greek model, inasmuch as some of the structural and moral features of the Hellenic drama are here conspicuous by their absence. It is simply a fearful tale, contrived with that artistry and impassioned language which Mr. Phillips can command; the scenes between the two lovers are ringing with the wild beauty of despair.

> On all the glory now we look our last;
> And without kiss, or pressure of the hand,
> Albeit we sway together helplessly,
> Hopelessly t'ward each other swaying still,
> Like trees across a river. . . .

and the figure of the grief-stricken old king, who "humbly re-ascends the throne" after their terrible death, is one that lingers in the memory.

Mr. Madison Cawein does not deal with such hard realities. His is a voice of yearning—of yearning to escape from the stress of materialism; he protests, as a poet may well do, against the commercial spirit of to-day, with its fevered ambitions, its onslaughts upon the beauty of wild nature. Both in his plays and in his poems he bids us take refuge in other times than ours, and other company; in haunted gardens or amid the sad fragrance of autumnal woodlands. He loves flowers. His elves and shadows share his cult of the beautiful; they feel love as mortals do, and can talk sweet philosophy—suffused, at times, with the pleasing fallacy of pragmatism:—

> The wise are only they who keep their minds
> As little children's, innocent of doubt,
> Believing all things beautiful are true.

The third of these plays, wherein Mr. Cawein escapes from his environment into the age of the troubadours, is a well-pondered and homogeneous performance. Of his poems those "In Old New England" strike us as the most sincere.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Inkster's *Vale* is meant no more seriously than the periodical farewellings of Madame Patti, for we like his sonnets, and would like to have some more of such things as *On first reading the "Hound of Heaven."* There is promise and distinction in these outpourings; he forges and smelts his rimes lovingly; he is so susceptible to various aspects of beauty that a certain incoherency of attitude, we feel sure, will presently resolve itself into an outlook harmonious and utterance sustained.

And we also like these *Silhouettes in Song*—a goodly output of verse. The author handles the sonnet-form prettily; he has insight, an eye for detail, and all the lyrist's sympathy with the inexorable spirit of a great metropolis—its docks and labyrinthine waterways, its glistening pavements, where huddled figures, sunk in misery, crouch through the dim hours of the night. Altogether, a volume that grows upon one.

There are good things, too, as might be expected, in Mr. Bottomley's second *Chambers of Imagery*. "Babel: the Gate of the God," for instance, is a fine conceit, and worthy of the eerie inspiration of its author. But we do not greatly fancy the "Hymn of Imagination"; it is too full of abstractions:

> The nourishings of religion is invention,
> Wonders and furbishings;
> There merchants of the incredible, in contention,
> Postulate Divinity apart
> From knowledge or perception; crude desire
> Seeks an Unknown for gaping at, a mart
> Where virtue whips God's first debentures higher. . .

All this is perfectly true; still, five pages of it are apt to grow wearisome. Why cannot Mr. Bottomley, with his remarkable sense of colour and form and groupings, with his Maeterlinckian power of conveying moods—why cannot he suffuse such disquisitions with a few gleams of concrete imagery? The "Night and Morning Songs," again, betray a tendency to flutter into the inane, and their artlessness is a little—how shall we put it?—a little self-conscious and premeditated.

Miss Alice Law's *Twenty Imaginary Sonnets of Tasso to Leonora* are thoughtful and pleasing productions. Some poems on general subjects follow; that on a "Ballade of Chopin" being marked by a decorous sense of conduct in love-affairs which would have surprised and gratified the unhappy composer.

Mr. G. Greene is another minstrel who has drawn, in *Songs of the Open Air*, what seems to us the best of his inspiration from Italy. But here it is Shelley on the Tuscan shores concerning whom the poet sings with melodious feeling in *Southern Memories*. The last line on p. 43 is poor; and poems such as "The Murmuring Streams" are too anthropomorphic to please our generation.

Songs of the Borderland are even more redolent of the open air; of breezy rambles, and fox-hunting and racing; of the old Border life with its warfare and traditions, its lakes and fells and flowery woodlands. In the "Dance of the Dryads," a graceful little effusion, Mr. Palmer has transplanted the Greek lore upon his own bracken-covered hillsides; the dramatic lyric entitled "The Passing" is original and stimulating.

POLITICAL

HOME RULE. By L. H. REDMOND-HOWARD. With a Preface by Robert Harcourt, M.P. Jack. 6*d*.

This little volume of ninety pages is a welcome and useful addition to the admirable series of "People's Books." The author, a nephew of the Irish leader, gives succinctly the history of the whole movement that has now culminated in the Bill before the House of Commons. As Mr. Harcourt rightly observes, the supporters of that measure are not met with argument, because no argument exists, but are inundated with essays on the ethics of electioneering. After disposing of that political red-herring, Mr. Harcourt points out that Home Rule in the widest sense is less a principle than a necessity: "the Union does not mean Unity, but top-heaviness and congestion; hæmorrhage of the brain and paralysis of the limbs." But now, so far has opinion progressed though the object-lessons of Canada, Australia, and still more of South Africa, that this short summary of the Home Rule case will be found sufficient to convince many of its absolute inevitability.

MY IRISH YEAR. By PADRAIC COBURN. With 15 illustrations. Mills and Boon. 10*s*. 6*d*.

The disproportionate price and format of this book will, we fear, turn away many probable purchasers. It is a pity; for we know of no book that deals with Irish life at once so competent and intimate. One of the strangest things in writings on Ireland is to find those whose knowledge of their native land is indisputable, and who yet are tainted with what one may call the "stage Irishman idea" in the wider sense. It is not only an altogether false conception; but it is false in such small, and yet fundamental, ways that one is compelled to dismiss the whole thing, despite certain superficial resemblances. Indeed, the genuine article is hard to convey, just because it is not quite so easy to dismiss the false picture wholeheartedly and unsparingly.

The value of *My Irish Life* is just that Mr. Padraic Coburn, without any manifest effort to do so, quietly and unostentatiously effects the substitution of the true for the false. It was to be expected that he would.

Both as a poet and writer of plays, despite severe limitations of manner, the most remarkable thing in his work was his directness of approach. And in the present book this quality of his mind has invested it with what we do not hesitate to call a rare value. It should in a measure help to date things. It is a book that those who have any love for, or interest in, Irish Ireland will not fail to put on their shelves.

Unhappily, however, its audience will be restricted. Not only by reason of its price, but also because Mr. Coburn's inability to lay out the lines of a book (which is, indeed, the vice of his virtue of directness) is nowhere so marked as here. Instead of making of his book a continuous narrative, carrying forward its progress in an apt sequence, he has placed his material down chiefly as it occurred to him, in a loose and disjointed way. When to this is added the fact that there is no index to the book, it becomes exceedingly difficult to come upon its matter in an orderly way. Farming details, the relations between the trader and the farmer, with which is involved the social scheme of an Irish countryside, folklore, education, and priesthood, are all mixed together in a perplexing disorder.

As we have said, this is a pity. Mr. Coburn has a quick literary curiosity, and has been at some pains to collect together countryside ballads, religious (in both the Christian and non-Christian senses), social and political. These he has put down, with tales and stories illustrative of the effect of ancient times on the modern way of life. Yet, in this matter, his curiosity is confined to such gleanings. Perhaps it is too much to demand that he should also display the continuity of such traditions. It is, of course, true, as he says, that 1846 and 1879, the two great periods of starvation (for "famine" it was not, with plenty in the land), has largely blotted out the people's memory of their traditions. But a nation cannot so easily divest itself of its national instinct, and instinct is another and earlier form of memory. We ourselves have come across several noteworthy instances of such an instinct, and they accord so well with some of the relics that Mr. Coburn has placed down in his book that we could wish he had traced them out more fully.

However, it is not only this aspect of Irish life that engages Mr. Coburn's attention. He outlines with considerable distinctness the life on the land and the life in towns. He comes forward with wise and constructive criticisms of the Irish farming economy, of the way in which the operation of the principle of birthright helps emigration, and of the derivation of the Irish Nationalist Party from the "Gombeen" man. There are many things we would have liked him to say that he leaves omitted. Those who know the social difficulties of writing publicly on Irish life will understand why. But the main fact is that Mr. Padraic Coburn has given us an invaluable book dealing with things at first hand.

SOCIAL

PROBLEMS IN RAILWAY REGULATION. By HENRY S. HAINES. New York, Macmillan, 1911.

At a time when the public is much exercised by a variety of railway problems, when a new Railways Act is under consideration by the House of Commons, and when railway nationalisation has come to be regarded as a practical question, English readers cannot fail to be interested in a work on the subject by such a recognised authority as Mr. Haines, ex-president of the American Railway Association. Although Mr. Haines confines himself to the United States, his account of railway regulation in that country and of the ways in which its system has affected the general welfare, together with several suggestions as to reform, have valuable lessons for England. The volume, which deals with different attempts made by means of Government regulatior to provide a remedy for admitted evils, covers the periods of the formation, the extension, and the re-construction of the American railway system, the tendencies of

Government regulation, and the problems of incorporation, finance, construction, discrimination, and rate making, and the vital question of the relations of capital and labour. In the latter chapter he gives an instructive account of the way in which the movement for State regulation took its rise in the discontent with drastic reductions of wages; of the conflicts between the companies and the men, after the latter had been organised in Trade Unions or Brotherhoods; and how those conflicts have been affected by the legislation which has, he says, made the Commissioner of Labour and the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission official arbiters to determine how the gross earnings of the railway system are to be divided between employers and employed. Mr. Haines contends that, with this legislation, the Federal Government will be placed in a dilemma similar to that of certain States of Continental Europe if it undertakes to secure low rates to shippers and high wages to railway employees with an equitable return on invested capital, while it cannot, in case of a strike, solve the problem, as was done in France, by summoning the railway men to do their military service.

PSYCHOLOGY: A NEW SYSTEM BASED ON THE STUDY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PROCESSES OF THE HUMAN MIND. By ARTHUR LYNCH, M.A., C.E., I.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.E., M.P. Stephen Swift. 2 vols. 10*s.* 6*d.* each net.

"Standing therefore before the unlimited domain of knowledge, the scope entire of thought or experience in any form, we may ask: Is it possible to conduct the analysis through this vast and complex world so as finally to arrive at certain elements, the unanalysable processes; and to show that the modes of synthesis of these form the scheme of all that can be known? To offer an answer to this question is the object of the present work."

As is indicated by the above quotation, the aim of this book is to present not merely a psychology but a logic and a metaphysic, and to solve the whole problem of the cosmos in 786 pages exclusive of an index. "In a manner which is not intended to be dogmatic but simply didactic," Mr. Lynch formulates his Fundamental Processes "in their nudity thus": (1) Immediate Presentation; (2) Conception of Unit; (3) Memory; (4) Association; (5) Agreement; (6) Generalisation; (7) Feeling of Effort; (8) Impulse; (9) Hedonic Sense; (10) Sense of Negation; (11) Conception of Time; (12) Conception of Space. This thesis is elaborated at considerable length, and pleasantly variegated by numerous digressions, on various general and particular problems of science and life. Without challenging Mr. Lynch's erudition, which is sufficiently attested by the multiplicity of his quotations and the copiousness of his footnotes, it seems fair to say that while the book is too long-winded and technical to be of interest to the general reader (who will find far more illumination in a small volume by Frend or MacDougal than in the whole compass of this *magnum opus*), it is far too amateurish to possess either scientific or philosophical value.

THE LIVING WAGE. By PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P. Hodder and Stoughton.

It is a terrible tale, this little book of wages and prices of commodities, showing that about 30 per cent. of our population is on the starvation line, underfed and helpless. The problem cannot be treated here. Suffice it to say that Mr. Snowden's book is worth the attention of serious people, even if he offers little contribution himself towards its solution. Very rightly he shows the little good to workmen accruing from successful strikes; as how the objection of the unions to compulsory arbitration is gradually weakening at its result. Last year the Voluntary Conciliation Boards failed signally on three great occasions, in the cases of the cotton trade, the mining industry, and the transport industry. And the great strikes of 1911 showed the helplessness of the Government to assert itself in a practical and effective way. That is the primary lesson of 1911. The question now is what next. Mr. Snowden seems to doubt the possibility

of a standard minimum wage of 30*s.* a week, but approves of compulsory conciliation boards, established as such, on a permanent basis, irrespective of party politics. The real trouble is that in the last decade the bare necessaries of life have increased in price, whereas wages have not. That the whole question is one of urgent national importance is obvious from the figures quoted in this little book, written lucidly, without bias or exaggeration.

MODERN DEMOCRACY. A STUDY IN TENDENCIES. By BROUGHAM VILLIERS. T. Fisher Unwin. *7s. 6d.* net.

From the first sentence of Mr. Villier's book: "The present generation is witnessing the most important revolution in history," one is tempted to spoil many page margins with marks of interrogation. Not that one quarrels with all Mr. Villiers writes, but he puts his case in such a provoking way. The whole book savours more of the public platform than either the study or the workroom. Briefly, the case put forward is that modern democracy demands a type of legislation which he calls by the ugly name "Guarantism"; that is, Government must guarantee a minimum standard of life to every member of the community. In the elaboration of this thesis Mr. Villiers is at great pains to explain that all modern legislation is directed to this end, so we may take it that all is right as rain with us. Keeping a sufficient distance behind the band to make his voice effective, he "barracks up" for the present Coalition Government for all he is worth. With much that he writes on "Guarantism" we have no quarrel, but we must emphatically disagree with his praise of Labour M.P.'s and the Independent Labour Party. There are few progressives in politics to-day who are more widely divorced from the actualities of life among the workers than are the majority of the Labour members of Parliament; and as for the I.L.P. being the sane and successful Socialist Party—well, Mr. Villiers is a few years behind the times. The I.L.P. is dead—but doesn't know it. And that point is illustrative of the weakness of the whole book. The author realises the tremendous influence of the past twenty years' Labour and Socialist propaganda on present-day politics, but he fails to realise that the men who were responsible for this are now as moribund as their one-time foes. The Hardie-Macdonald I.L.P.-ism is played out, and to say that these men and their outworn ideas are of any use to modern democracy is foolish. Mr. Villiers should go out and study the new movement as it is being formed by the young democrats, who are groping their way through the dangerous thickets of Syndicalism and industrial action to a wider and more comprehensive grasp of the problems affecting modern democracy. Once the strike was the "only weapon" of the workers, then the vote, now "Guarantism" (ugh!) is the magic word. No, it will not do. Modern democracy wants even more than a guaranteed minimum of loaves and fishes. Some scores of thousands of dockers have just starved themselves, their wives and families, for ten weeks for little more than a point of honour. Let Mr. Villiers ponder over that simple and glorious fact, and he will then, no doubt, give us a really great interpretation of the aims and aspirations of modern democracy.

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